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Cover: A view of the Himalayas from Nepal

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उत्तिष्ठत
जागृत
प्राप्य
वरान्निबोधत

PRABUDDHA BHARATA

ARISE! AWAKE! AND STOP NOT TILL THE GOAL IS REACHED

Vol. 101 NOVEMBER 1996 No. 11

Divine Wisdom

DISCIPLINES FOR REALIZATION

(Sage Kapila to his mother Devahūti)

योगस्य लक्षणं वक्ष्ये सबीजस्य नृपात्मजे।
मनो येनैव विधिना प्रसन्नं याति सत्पथम्॥

O Mother! I shall now describe to you the nature of meditation on the formful aspect of the Supreme Being. By practising it the mind is purified and established in the Divine consciousness.

स्वधर्माचरणं शक्त्या विधर्माच्च निवर्तनम्।
दैवाल्लब्धेन सन्तोष आत्मविच्चरणार्चनम्॥

An aspirant must abstain from evil ways and perform all his duties in a spirit of dedication to the Lord. He must serve holy men and feel happy with what he happens to possess.

ग्राम्यधर्मनिवृत्तिश्च मोक्षधर्मरतिस्तथा।
मितमेध्यादनं शश्वद्विविक्तक्षेमसेवनम्॥

He must shun the ways of the worldlings and develop a deep interest in the ways that lead to spiritual realization. He should eat only moderately and what is conducive to the health of the body and purity of the mind. He should develop a love for solitude and should periodically spend time in solitary places.

अहिंसा सत्यमस्तेयं यावदर्थपरिग्रहः।
ब्रह्मचर्यं तपः शौचं स्वाध्यायः पुरुषार्चनम्॥

He must abstain from injuring others, exploiting others, talking too much, accumulating property, and indulgence in sexual thoughts, words or deeds. He must be devoted to truth, cleanliness, austerity, scriptural study, and the worship of the Divine.

—*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam,* 3.28.1–4

Drug Abuse and the Hindu Scriptures

The following is one of the newspaper reports we referred to in the September editorial:

Cultural Traditions 'sustain drug abuse'

The malady of drug abuse in India can be directly attributed to the place of narcotics in the country's cultural traditions and religious practices, says a research study.

The abuse of 'bhang' in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Orissa and Karnataka, 'smack' in the national Capital and opium in Saurashtra and Rajasthan is a direct result of the place of narcotics in cultural practices sustained by religious texts. They supply the 'reference material' on such substances, says the survey conducted by the National Addiction Research Centre (NARC) here (Bombay).

NARC director-general Gabriel Brito said that the research was part of a seven-nation study on 'culture and drug abuse', sponsored by the International Federation of Catholic Universities and Commission of European Communities.

Dr. H.Y. Sidiqui, who conducted the study in North India, said poverty, illiteracy and low social status in urban areas generally generated an aggressive behaviour among residents, which might not be the case in rural or tribal areas.

Almost 65 per cent of the drug abusers were partially or totally dependent on their families, and most of them used drugs as a conduit for release of tension and to overcome their frustrations in mundane life, he added.

In rural areas of Rajasthan, every third male reportedly consumes opium casually or regularly.

The study says, in Rajasthan's Barna village, dominated by Chaudharis (Jats), people take drugs to cope up with the hardships of desert life. The day temperature soaring to 45 degrees Celsius in the summer, acute water shortage, lack of mobility, unemployment and poverty, all have contributed to the habit of opium consumption.

Seventy per cent of the addicts in the area are illiterate. The social approval to consume the drug on various occasions is also a catalyst for opium consumption.

The ban through the Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985, has not affected the availability of opium in the area, although it has escalated the price. Black-marketing has led to deterioration in quality, but the cheaper opium pods serve the purpose just as well, the study points out.

In Orissa, it is ganja in urban areas and liquor in the rural area. The Santhal, Majis and Bhumij tribes of Mayurbhanj district spend a considerable part of their daily income on illicit liquor. Bhumij tribes consume home-made 'handia' and 'mahua'.

Puri, on the eastern coast, has the world-famous Lord Jagannath temple, a very sacred place for the Hindus. Distribution and consumption of bhang, opium and ganja outside the temple is very common, particularly among elderly women. Small bhang stalls are spread over the city.

In Chattisgarh (Madhya Pradesh), a section of the Dewar tribe is rag-pickers, residing near the Bhilai steel plant. They used to brew 'mahua' at home a few

years back. But with the easy availability of country liquor, a Dewar family now consumes an average of two bottles daily that cost about Rs. 12 to Rs. 15.

The study by Dr. Edwin J. Mashi and Dr. D.B. Desai found historical roots for opium addiction in the Saurashtra region of western Gujarat. The epithet 'bandhini' of an opium addict was an honorific title, which was also glorified in the texts associated with kings and warriors.

Courtesy, The Hindusthan Times
New Delhi

We tried to procure a copy of the whole of the original report of the study, but could not because it was still in the press.[1] Nevertheless, since the above newspaper report was not contradicted nor corrected by NARC, we shall discuss the matter on two assumptions: i. that the newspaper report is correct, and ii. that the words 'country's cultural traditions' and 'religious texts, practices' refer in fact to Hinduism, certainly not to anything Christian or Islamic.

Basically we think that the NARC study is just another in the line of many others over the centuries to malign Hinduism, out of ignorance and as much intentionally, under a formidable-looking guise of so-called research, scholarship, scientism and objectivity. The inconsistencies and the holes in the report suggest that.

For example, the study appears to have failed to make a distinction between *use* and *abuse*. A rural Rajasthani who consumes opium casually or regularly is not an addict in the same sense or for the same reasons or to the same extent that an urbanite with a surplus of wellgotten or illgotten money gets addicted to drugs. As the report has discovered, the Jats of the Barna village of Rajasthan take opium to release their tensions, frustrations, etc. and because of the unbearable heat, acute water shortage, unemployment, etc. But heat in the desert was always there. Poverty, water shortage, etc. are recent gifts to these people by the urban proponents of development and consumerism. So, in all this where does the 'reference material' from the religious texts come into the picture?

Again, since the problem of drug abuse and alcoholism is said to be rampant at the lower strata of society—among the poor, the homeless, the vagrants, the unemployed and the illiterates—, how then did these people come to read the scriptures? Unless of course, despite poverty and job-hunting, they had somehow managed to snatch some time to hear religious discourses on such scriptures. Even so, do the Hindu scriptures deal mostly with the manufacture, use and abuse of narcotics, etc.? Certainly not. Nor do we wish to believe that the fieldworkers involved in the study had the misfortune (good fortune?) of coming across only such lectures, dramas, etc. that glorified the use/abuse of drugs.

In any case, since the newspaper doesn't mention it, we are eager to find out from the original study how many of the addicts who were examined said specifically that they were motivated by such and such 'reference material'.

And, by the way, what about the millions, even teenagers—whites, blacks, browns, ...—, in Europe, USA, Russia and other western countries in the clutches of this worldwide terror of drug addiction? Had they too got hold of the 'reference material' from Hindu scriptures? Let us not forget that one of the, or, arguably, the principal condition that preceded the spread of addiction in India is its spread first in the western societies.

Then, who are the drug-pushers? Only or predominantly the Hindus? Remember

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1. It is expected to be in two volumes, each 300 pages, and released soon by Mr. Breto Gabriel, NARC, Bhardawadi Hospital, V floor, Bhardawadi Road, Andheri (W), Mumbai, Maharashtra 400 053.

the Opium Wars the British and the French waged on China? (See the *Encyclopedia Brittanica, Micropedia,* under *opium.*) Then what about the occasional reports in the media mentioning the involvement of powerful politicians, certain intelligence agencies and criminals in the multi-billion dollar narco trade? Remember the Iran-Contra affair? The Columbian druglord Noriega's accusing finger pointing at a certain intelligence agency? So many similar disclosures have occurred over the past decades even about some Indians. No one has yet said, to our relief, that these drug-pushers and those in the drug-trade for political ends or for money are also influenced by the Hindu scriptures. Neither would it be scientific, or objective, much less decent, to say that they are motivated by the Biblical command to conquer the earth and flourish.

Now, granting that the Hindu religious texts mention the use of narcotics, alcohol, etc., and occasionally describe by the way their euphoric effects. Even then, since these texts are ancient, why do we not find any historian, political or religious leader or a foreign traveller before, say, the fourteenth century, lamentingly report on pervasive drug use/abuse in India of his days? On the contrary, we read of several foreigners coming here drawn by narratives about the greatness of the Hindu society, its wealth, its wise men of religion and science, its wonderful temples, and cultured population. India's learning, great prosperity and wealth were what in the first place attracted not only foreign students to Nalanda, Takshashila and her other universities, but also the plunderers. Strange that those religious reference material were not so well known or were ignored by the Indians of those days, or that those texts did not in any way encourage them to revel in drugs. How will NARC connect the Hindu religious texts—wealth—absence of drug abuse picture of ancient India with their present model of Hindu religious texts—poverty—drug abuse?

Now then, commonsense and honesty should drive sociologists rather to admit that the spread of drug abuse is related, at least in India, mostly to the spread of poverty etc.; in some other countries it is possible that drugs etc., though officially banned, are secretly allowed for racial or political reasons to be available to the undesirable sections of their societies from whom those in power perceive some threat.

So, the fact of the matter is quite different from what NARC thinks it has found. Religious texts are not to blame. Use of bhang, alcohol, or similar euphoric substances was prevalent the world over, though not for the same reasons in all societies, well before religious thoughts developed and scriptures came into existence. But especially in India, mention of these substances entered the religious texts for a profound reason. What the religious teachers, preeminently the Tantrics, did was to devise a method by which all thoughts and urges and objects of human use could be employed for spiritual uplift. The majority of the Hindu scriptures taught *renunciation* of several things—riches, anger, etc., and also the discrimination-destroying intoxicants in the present context—that hinder spiritual growth; and, as regards the remaining things, they taught in a general way that our possessions should be offered to God before use. The Tantras, on the other hand, developed special techniques for *transforming* everything within human experience and use into instruments of soul-awakening. The *Kulārṇava-Tantra* (2.25) says:

भोगो योगायते साक्षात्पातकं सुकृतायते।
मोक्षायते च संसारः कुलधर्मे कुलेश्वरी॥

Bhogo yogāyate sākṣāt-
pātakaṁ sukṛtāyate;
Mokṣāyate ca saṁsāraḥ
kula-dharme kuleśvarī.

O Kuleśvari (Pārvati), through the discipline of Tantra sense-pleasures get converted into yoga (means of union with the Divine); what are commonly considered causes of spiritual degradation get transmuted into virtues (which are causes of spiritual growth); and mundane existence becomes an instrument of spiritual Knowledge.

We have an instance of this method in recent history—Girish Chandra Ghosh, the great dramatist of Bengal. He was an alcoholic by human weakness—not because he found some supportive religious 'reference material' as the NARC might like to have it. But, fortunately, he was also acquainted with Sri Ramakrishna. It was Sri Ramakrishna who instead of condemning his weakness advised him to offer mentally every cup of wine before he drank it to Mother Kali, towards whom he had a congenital devotion. As a result, over the following years Girish was able to slowly give up drinking—rather drinking gave him up. And the alcoholic intoxication he enjoyed at first was now replaced by the joy of inebriation in the thought of Mother Kali!

The Tantras, as it is well known, train a person how to give a spiritual direction even to the human sexual urge. Just because the Tantric texts and some other texts deal with such lust-related matters, it does not mean that all the sexual immorality we find going on in society is because of these texts. So with meat-eating. The Tantras even show how to give a Godward turn to the weakness of some people for meat.

व्योमपङ्कजनिस्यन्दसुधापानरतो नरः।
सुधापानमिदं प्रोक्तमितरे मद्यपायिनः॥

Vyoma-paṅkaja-nisyanda-
sudhāpāna-rato naraḥ;
Sudhāpānam-idaṁ proktam-
itare madya-pāyinaḥ.

That is true wine-drinking when a person is immersed in drinking the wine gushing from his spiritual heart. Others are but ordinary drunkards.

पुण्यापुण्यपशुं हत्वा ज्ञानखड्गेन योगवित्।
परे लयं नयेच्चित्तं पलाशी स निगद्यते॥

Puṇya-apuṇya-paśuṁ hatvā
jñāna-khaḍgena yogavit;
Pare layaṁ nayet-cittaṁ
palāśī sa nigadyate.

A person who knows the method of uniting one's self with the Divine should merge one's mind in the Supreme after killing the animal in the form of one's (conventionally defined) merits and demerits. He is called a true 'meat eater'.

पराशक्त्यात्ममिथुनसंयोगानन्दनिर्भरः।
य आस्ते मैथुनं तत्स्यादपरे स्त्रीनिषेवकाः॥

Parā-śakty-ātma-mithuna-
saṁyoga-nirbharaḥ;
Ya āste maithunaṁ tat-
syād-apare strī-niṣevakāḥ.

That is true union when one remains established in the spiritual bliss of union of one's self with the supreme Divine Power. Other persons are but philanderers.

(*Kulārṇava*, 5.108–09, 112)

Similarly, the mention of the use of Soma in Vedic rituals is not responsible for alcoholism any more than is the use of wine in Christian rituals for alcoholism etc. in western societies.

We should remember the fact that drug-abuse, alcoholism, etc. is least prevalent among those most intimately acquainted with the Hindu scriptures and the practices they prescribe. So the disinforma-

tion—that these scriptures in any way favoured those abuses since they contained such reference material—arose and spread among the masses (who were heretofore only vaguely aware of the scriptural details) after several so-called Orientalists with ulterior motives began ridiculing such Hindu texts.

The outlines of their well-laid policy becomes clear to anyone who cared to study it: First comes a front of 'intellectuals' and 'scholars', who identify the weak spots of Hindu society and then more often than not trace their origins to the Vedas or other religious texts and beliefs. They provide an impressive mask of authority and authenticity to the whole research and its conclusions. Now come forward the real backers of the 'research', the missionaries. They take over from here and go about enlightening the uninformed masses—about the defects and sins in their lives; how their religious beliefs are their root causes as the researches have shown; and why they must renounce their unhealthy sinful practices if they would improve; and finally counselling that they can give up their wrong ways only if they foreswear their sin-perpetuating scriptures and religion and embrace the new pure religion. A religion that has ensured Western prosperity and power. As a result, a number of those poor fellows believe it—little aware of the pathetic problem of drugs and alcoholism in those societies; even without the influence of Hindu 'cultural practices'.

Precisely because the Hindus' ignorance of their sacred scriptures is responsible for their being carried away by misinterpretation, Swamiji exhorted nearly a century ago to the upper classes of the Hindus: Bring out the sacred texts and teach them to the common people. Help them also get higher culture and spiritual sustenance from those books, which are their principal source.

Be that as it may, the fact then is that narcotics etc. are available and *used* here not because the scriptures lend support but because of social practices that by far antedate the religious books. Further, today drugs etc. are more easily and widely available and *abused* because of increasing poverty etc. and because politicians and others, considering the fantastic monetary gains involved, are promoting that.

One more important factor is the false glamour that has got attached to the use of drugs etc., because of the misfits, the depressed and the restless of western societies roaming about in India in search of drugs, courtesy the Tourism Industry. These people, who are neither illiterate, nor poor, nor suffering from the hardships of life as in a desert where the temperature rises to 45 °C, have given the use of these intoxicants a false stamp of joy, freedom, defiance and modernity. Then of course there are those innumerable movies which, in the name of showing the realities of life or the dangers of drugs etc., have knowingly or unknowingly brought it most into the awareness of the masses, specially the youth. This is something similar to what has happened with violence in society. It was always there, from time immemorial. But its frequent projection through the movies, in the name of realism and teaching against the dangers of violence, have only made it virulent and sophisticated.

That the survey report is perverse is evident also from the para referring to the sale of bhang, opium, etc. outside the Jagannath temple at Puri. It sounds as though such sales are a part of the temple's activities, or carried on with the connivance of the temple's staff. But we know that such activities have multiplied only recently, after the Puri beach began to be developed for foreign 'tourists'. If this kind of survey and ways of drawing conclusions are rational, then it is even more so to say that all the misdeeds of the west in their former colonies can be 'directly attributed' to Christian doctrines. There is at least a solid basis for this in the

book, *The Power and Secret of the Jesuits*, by René Füller,[2] who quotes the rector of the Jesuit College at Tarazona, Spain, Father Baltasar Gracian's advice to his disciple: 'What is likely to win favour, do yourself; what is likely to bring disfavour, get others to do; know how to dispense contempt; intervene in the affairs of others, in order quietly to accomplish your own ends; trust in today's friends as if they might be tomorrows's enemies; use human means as if there were no divine ones, and divine means as if there were no human ones; leave others in doubt about your attitude; sweeten your "no" by a good manner; contrive to discover everybody's thumb screw; trust in the crutch of time rather than in the iron club of Hercules; refuse nothing flatly, so that the dependence of your petitioner may last longer; always act as if you were seen; never give anyone an opportunity to get to the bottom of us; without telling lies, do not yet tell all the truth; do not live by fixed principles, live by opportunity and circumstances....'

Consider the curse of alcoholism in India today. As far back as in 1894 we have Bishop W.X. Ninde of Detroit admit, 'Why, it is positively a fact that English liquor merchants have been sending men throughout India for the express purpose of educating the natives to drink intoxicating liquors...I could recite many instances of degradation caused by the drink habit....'[3] The *Journal*, which published this on 16 February 1894, published another letter, signed 'E.J.', four days later:

> ...It would have done more credit to our Christianity for the bishop to have accepted without comment Vive Kananda's assertion that there is comparatively little drunkenness in India than to have proved its falsity by admitting that a Christian nation, professing a civilization and a religion far in advance of that of Buddha, introduced that degrading vice to a temperate and religious people, and spread it broadcast there through insatiate love of gain. It is a more bitter reflection upon our boasted Christianity than any Vive Kananda made....[3]

And what was the 'bitter reflection' Swamiji made? Amongst other things, he had sorrowfully exclaimed:

> One thing I would tell you, and I do not mean any unkind criticism. You train and educate and clothe and pay men to do what?—to come over to my country and curse and abuse all my forefathers, my religion and my everything....And whenever your ministers criticize us let them remember this: If all India stands up and takes all the mud that is at the bottom of the Indian ocean and throws it up against the western countries, it will not be doing an infinitesimal part of that which you are doing to us.[3]

The conclusion is that religions are not to be blamed, directly or indirectly, for the maladies in society. Human weaknesses should take the blame and stand ready to be corrected—through religion. For, all religions have but only one purpose in view—betterment of humanity. So, instead of denigrating the 'Indian' religious texts, cultural traditions and reference materials, the NARC as also the others interested *solely* in the welfare of this country should take positive steps—for bringing education, economic independence and security to the lower strata of Indian society, and sanity to the so called urban 'enlightened torch bearers' who are themselves being swept away by valuelessness in life. ❐

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2. Translated from the German by F.S. Flint and D.F. Tait; The Viking Press, New York City.
3. Marie Louise Burke, *Swami Vivekananda in the West: New Discoveries*, vol. 1, pp. 315, 323, 378–9.

Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad

SWAMI SRIDHARANANDA

(Continued from the previous issue)

तदेतत्सत्यम्—
मन्त्रेषु कर्माणि कवयो यान्यपश्यं-
स्तानि त्रेतायां बहुधा सन्ततानि।
तान्याचरथ नियतं सत्यकामा
एष वः पन्थाः सुकृतस्य लोके॥

Tad etat satyaṁ
Mantreṣu karmāṇi kavayo yāny-apaśyan-
stāni tretāyāṁ bahudhā santatāni;
Tānyācaratha niyataṁ satyakāmā
eṣa vaḥ panthāḥ sukṛtasya loke. (I.ii.1)

This is the truth: The works (karmāṇi) *which the wise sages* (kavayaḥ) *discovered in the sacred sayings* (mantras, *the hymns of the Vedas) occur throughout the three Vedas and are accomplished variously. You, the lovers of truth, i.e., who desire true results, perform them constantly. This is your path leading to the world of the fruits of good deeds.*

The teacher says: That which I am going to tell you is truth. There is another approach to *satya,* of the facts of life, to which you must listen now and see the pitfalls in the arguments put forth in the *karma-kāṇḍa.* The choice is yours to make.

Among all the *mantras* found in the three Vedas, discovered by those who had traversed the path to Brahman, there is some truth; even in the injunctions regarding *karma,* work. In the *Ṛk, Sāma,* and *Yajur-Vedas,* in many places are found *mantras* or dictates as to what, how, when and, in what manner one should do the duties of life. The great ones saw their truth and performed them as enjoined by the Vedas. Taking up the whole gamut of *aparā-vidyā* in the *mantras* and following the instructions laid down therein, they tested the veracity of these statements by performing them correctly and faithfully. The knower of Brahman also goes through the whole range of duties, and says from his own experiences that the seekers of truth should also go through this procedure and find out for themselves whether or not the procedure leads to the ultimate truth.

The philosophical implication is that every work we do is followed by its *phala* (fruit). *Karma* and *karmaphala* are invariably and inviolably related. In Hindi we say—'*Jaisī karnī, vaisī bharnī,* as you sow, so will you reap'. The good and the bad acts lead to consequences which have to be borne; it is only a matter of time and circumstances, *kāla saṁyoga.*

There is a class of people who, by nature, are Ritualists and not Meditators. They are bubbling with energy, wanting to do something. Were the Upaniṣads only to discuss philosophical and intellectual matters, then they cannot be said to be *matṛ-sama* (mother-like); for, the majority of people want to act and obtain the results of their acts.

So the *Muṇḍaka* does not neglect this group: it propounds not only the *Ātma-jñāna* or *Brahma-jñāna* but also lays down the injunctions regarding the performance of the

duties of life. *Karma-kāṇḍa* enunciates a code of conduct that does not violate the main principles of nature. Today we are aware that if we disturb one aspect of nature, the whole ecological system and balance of nature get disturbed. The Upaniṣads talk not only of the natural law but also of the moral law. The natural law is that, to every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. The moral law is that, this whole world is run on a particular pattern by the will of the Divine, and if one deviates from this divine will because of one's selfish interests or beastly propensities, it will bring repercussions harmful to one's moral growth. This moral law is termed *ṛtam, satyam*. So, if instead of going against the will of God, man's conduct follows that will, it strengthens morality in society and order in nature. Therefore, let us not look down on the *karma-kāṇḍa*. They enunciate certain types of activities called *yāga* and *yajña:* One must get up fortyfive minutes before sunrise in the *Brāhma-muhūrta,* the most auspicious time, because then there is peace within oneself. That is the best time for meditation and concentration. Get up, bathe and be clean, then sit for meditation. Think of the Creator of the universe. Seek His grace to understand the mysteries of the universe. Then one after another the daily duties follow till three hours after sundown, which is the time for retiring.

Thus, the activities for the whole day are fixed by them in a perfect routine so that the *pañca-ṛṇas* (five-fold debts)—to the gods (the *deva-ṛṇa*), to the sages (the *ṛṣi-ṛṇa*), to the ancestors (the *pitṛ-ṛṇa*), to humanity (the *nṛ-ṛṇa*), and to the creatures (the *bhūta-ṛṇa*)—are repaid through the five *mahā-yajñas* (great sacrifices). The *devas* are the principles underlying Nature and we should not disregard them, nor misuse the elements—sound, light, water, air and space; this is the discharge of the *deva-ṛṇa*. The *ṛṣis,* sages, have given us the Upaniṣads. We owe them gratitude; so, by reciting the Vedas we pay respect to them. Our forefathers have put us in debt to them by fashioning our bodies. So we sacrifice for them too. Then the whole of mankind nurtures us directly or indirectly, and we sacrifice for them too. The animal kingdom contributes to Nature, and so we should not destroy them or create an imbalance in the animal kingdom out of greed or self-interest. Thus, the *karma-kāṇḍa* describes the way of life from morning till night through life, so that no law of nature, of the human or of the animal kingdom, is violated. Instead the law is strengthened by our behaviour as it amounts to setting up a tradition.

Therefore, O satyakāmāḥ, seekers of truth, you are welcome to perform all the acts mentioned in the three Vedas. You are expected to conducted yourself according to their dictates, instructions, regarding your daily routine, in a regular and disciplined manner, without any break. The actions must be done under proper self-restraint, with dedication and devotion, as enjoined by the Vedic *mantras*. This way of life (*panthāḷi*) takes us to the world of good deeds (*sukṛta-loka*). So let us not say that the *karma-kāṇḍa* is not true or that it pertains to a lesser degree of truth; for, this path also leads to that desired goal—the various worlds.

However, we should not confuse *sukṛta* with the concept of *niṣkāma-karma* in the *Gītā*. For, this *sukṛta-karma* is *sakāma-karma:* the purpose of leading a life of austerity, sacrifice and self-control in accordance with the *karma-kāṇḍa* is to create a fund of virtuous fruits which will take us to a happy life in heaven after death. But what is created in time disintegrates also in time, according to the law of nature, even if it be after crores of years. The *phala* created by *karma* will come to an end, will disintegrate some day. Still, *karma-kāṇḍa* is true for one interested in leading a correct life and playing a part in maintaining the rhythm of the universe. The im-

plication is that one should not get swollen-headed and say that he will study the *jñāna-kāṇḍa* because the *karma-kāṇḍa* is too inferior. For, one must try out *karma-kāṇḍa* for oneself and find out whether it is true of not, whether its results are permanent or transient. One should not go by hearsay, but judge by one's own experience.

We find that the results are, no doubt, very pleasing, very enjoyable; but not everlasting. In spite of a long duration of comfortable stay in heaven, immortality will not be obtained. That is why wise people say that *jñāna-kāṇḍa* is more rewarding than *karma-kāṇḍa:* by knowing one's true spiritual nature, permanent liberation from bondage is achieved. However righteous one may be in performing deeds according to the *karma-kāṇḍa* by generating a tremendous will-power and selflessness, which is very rewarding, the result still comes to an end one day. Śaṅkarācārya therefore begins the commentary on this *mantra* by saying that this *satya,* truth, is *āpekṣikam,* relative, and *not* absolute. This Upaniṣad itself shows the fallacy of the path of *karma-kāṇḍa* because it does not lead to liberation-in-life and attainment of bliss (*jīvan-mukti-sukhaprāpti*)—the goal of embodied beings.

यदा लेलायते ह्यर्चिः समिद्धे हव्यवाहने।
तदाज्यभागावन्तरेणाहुतीः प्रतिपादयेत्* ॥

Yadā lelāyate-arciḥ
samiddhe havya-vāhane;
Tad-ājya-bhāgāv-antareṇ-
*āhutīḥ pratipādayet**· (I.ii.2)

After the sacrificial fire has been set ablaze, when the flame shoots up, then one should, with faith and reverence, offer the oblations in that part which is between the two positions, the right and the left.

Now the teacher takes up the most common, least complicated and most easy to perform ritual known as the *Agnihotra-yajña.* [*Sabali* (sacrifice with an animal or an equivalent) is called *yajña,* and *abali* (sacrifice without animals, etc.) is called *yāga;* both are sacrifices for appeasing the gods.] *Agnihotra* is to be performed everyday at sunrise and sunset. Fire is the most effulgent element in nature which can either help or destroy men. Offering of ghee is to be made to that fire at an appropriate time and in a proper manner. The fuel or wood must be cut properly, arranged properly in a triangular form, and the wooden chips must cross each other. The offerings are to be made when the fire is properly burning, when the flames are shooting upwards. At that time whatever one wishes to offer to the Divine must be placed in the centre of the fire. The offering should be done when the fuel is burning bright, neither before nor after. One should sit facing east. This is the injunction given. One has not been given any freedom to do it in whichever manner one likes, because the aim is to discipline one's mind and to develop one's will-power, instead of being guided by one's whims, caprices and moods.

We are always free to ask the why, how and what of things. Let us not accept blindly but understand why this methodology has been laid down as a way of life. Each soul is potentially Divine, as all the religions say. But we are not aware of our true original nature, because of the endless desires polluting our mind and making it non-reflective. So the Saccidānanda, Atman or Brahman within is not reflected in a complete manner in this mind. Therefore desire has to be controlled and destroyed, either by the psychic control of *rāja-yoga,* i.e., by diving deep within and getting hold of the subtle desires

(Continued on page 637)

* An additional phrase, *śraddhayā-hutam, offered with faith and reverence,* occurs here in some readings.

Prabuddha Bharata, vols. 5 and 6, November and December, 1896

Nanda, The Pariah Saint

(Continued from the previous issue)

Tradition, rich in legends and folklore, asserts that all the *Dīkshitars* on one and the same remarkable night dreamt that Natarāja appeared to them in their vision and directed them to take into their Brahmin fold the purest of his *Bhaktas*, Nanda the *pariah* saint. It was a beautiful morning, when the sun had just risen, and the *Dīkshitars* had returned from their bath with sacred ashes besmeared all over their bodies and *rudrākshas*[1] hanging loosely round their necks. They assembled a miscellaneous council in the Devasabhā, their general meeting place within the temple.

Appiah Dīkshitar, the eldest of the group, rose and told his wonderful dream—how Natarāja appeared before him, and related the possibility of purifying Nanda by means of a fire-bath. Kuppannā Dīkshitar, his immediate successor in seniority, confirmed the dream by his own experience. Subbāh Dīkshitar saluted the two previous speakers and expressed his surprise at the coincidence of his dream with those related. Natarāja Dīkshitar did the same; and all the *Dīkshitars* simultaneously rose, and expressed the uniformity of their dreams. At once, when the wind was blowing fiercely and the sun was burning hot, arrangements were made for a sacred fire being reared.

Meanwhile Nanda had just risen from a long trance and was singing,

My maid, go tell my lovely Lord that I
Bow to His golden feet that dance
on high.

All shouted—*Natarāja, Natarāja*, etc. etc.

Nanda attempted to resume his song, but was choked with grief, as his long prayers had not yet borne fruit, and he had not yet been taken to the Presence. Just then the *Dīkshitars* appeared in a body before him and, bowing to him, to his great surprise, related to him their wonderful dreams, and took him over to the corner of the South Māda Street where the fire had been prepared. The pious devotee at once sprang into the fire joyfully singing, 'My father Iśa's feet are cool like the effulgent evening moon, the faultless Vina (a musical instrument), the breeze that unceasingly blows, the spring that swells, or a tank round which bees hum and swarm.'

O pious Nanda, frantic with holy enthusiasm! leap into the fire: fire scorcheth thee (i.e. thy inner reality, the Atman) not, water wetteth thee not, sword pierceth thee not, winds wither thee not; thou art a Brahmin, the *pariah* part of thee is burnt away. Of thee, now it may be said, 'Formless, yet all form; without inside and outside; beyond imperfection and perfection; without mark or character; all the Vedas declare thee to be One, higher far than the mountains, vaster far than the horizon; and, in the sight of the wise enjoying the abandon of wisdom, thou art neither he, nor she, nor it, but beautiful simply; no one can know thee.' Nanda! purified thou art by the fire of Wisdom, which

1. Wreaths of beads made from the seeds of a particular plant.

burns away all past, present and future karmas.

Metaphorically all traditions are true and, even when taken literally, they have a meaning. For, as that wise critic Renan observes, 'Faith demands the impossible, nothing less will satisfy it. To this very day, the Hindus every year walk over glowing coals in order to attest the virginity of Draupadi, the common wife of the five sons of Kunti.' Besides, we must learn to see 'how a narrative, anecdotal and fabulous in form, may be more true than the truth itself; how the glory of a legend belongs, in a sense, to the great man whose life that legend traces, and who has been able to inspire in his humble admirers qualities which, apart from him, they could never have invented. Often the hero creates his own legend.' The legend which has so much to say about Nanda speaks not a word about his followers. Every year the South Indian Railway train carries a multitude of people to Natarāja's shrine, but few have been invested with the halo of such a rich and beautiful legend.

Nanda passed through the crucible unhurt, nay, rose purer for the bath; what was burning and seething was now cool and refreshing; where there was imperfection, there was perfection; where there was want, there was now happiness; where there was low *pariah* caste, there now was Brahmin caste in the truest sense of the word. He was taken by the admiring *Dikshitars* from the South Māda Street through the Eastern tower gate broad like the Vedas, and speedily led on by the side of Kambattadi Mantapa (Subrahmanya's shrine) and the square tank, and across the Devasabhā, into the common platform midway between Srī Govindarāja Perumāl and the dancing Natarāja.

No damsel, richly laden with jewels and decorated for marriage with her favourite lover, ever went with greater joy to her nuptial bed fragrant with sandal and flowers, no humming bee ever went near the honey-filled flower 'that captive makes the surrounding winds', with greater eagerness than did Nanda the *pariah,* chanting forth his extempore hymns, the Vedas that sprang from his mouth, to the great Presence where once stood Appar, singing his famous song meaning,

He is my Lord, who is rare, who lives in the bosom of the gracious, who resides in the temple of the Vedas and in the atom; the true God yet unknown, who is sweet like honey and milk, the abounding light of heaven, the God of Gods, Brahma and Vishnu; the great invisible spirit that pervades the rolling sea and the mountain chains. The days on which I forgot to sing His praise are days in which I did not live.

and similar songs; where stood Mānikkar, fainting with love and pouring forth his remarkable Upanishads; where stood that sage of sages, Thāyumānavar, chanting forth his Vedic strains with eyes dimmed with tears; and where great men have left the dust of their feet to inspire noble and pious souls that may come after them. There now Nanda stood, and on both sides of the Kanaka-sabha (the golden *mantapa*) huge ocean-voiced bells poured forth their joyous chimes.

Appiah Dīkshitar entered into the shrine, made *pūja* to God with light (*dīpārādhana*) and all, in honour of the newly made Brahmin. And not Sīta freed from the demon Ajomukhi, nor even Rādha on the lonely Jamuna sands, ever rushed forth to the embrace of her beloved Lord more hastily than did Nanda, the *pariah* Brahmin, to the fond embrace of his idol of idols, of his dream of dreams, his love of loves, his favourite beautiful Natarāja—Natarāja,

holding up in one hand the eternal *Ātmic Jyoti* to attest the truth of His silent teaching, with His right leg planted over the illusion of suffering, and His left leg raised aloft, as if in search of lovers, serving as the highest banyan tree, the richest shade that could shelter against the scorching *samsāra* (worldly existence). Nanda the *pariah* disappeared into Nanda the Brahmin, and Nanda the Brahmin disappeared, once and for ever, into the eternal invisible Natarāja—disappeared, swan-like singing,

Natarāja my Lord, Natarāja my love,
My Lord, I come, I come, my love,
We both are only one from now;
Thou art I, and myself art Thou.
'In such access of mind, in such high
Hour of visitation from the living God,
Thought was not; in enjoyment it
expired;
No thanks he breathed, he proffered no
request;
Wrapt into still communion that
transcends
The imperfect offices of prayer and
praise
His mind was a thanksgiving to the
power
That made him; it was blessedness and
love.'

The admirers of Nanda, the *Dīkshitars* included, were struck dumb with wonder; and, on recovering, glorified Nanda's love and Natarāja's grace in the following words:

A sacrifice he made of his warring mind, no wicked deity Thou, O Thou blessed calmness of the *turīya*[2] state, all Thy bondsman's love was as water to wash Thy holy feet. The soul that resided within him was the offering, and his life an incense at Thy holy altar—and this, not for one day, but throughout—O Thou, the honeyed juice of the Vedas, their nectar, their sugar, the bliss that never gluts, the kinship that silently mingles with the thievish mind, Thou God of grace that danceth an eternal dance in the beautiful assembly of the wise, the sphere of eternity, the abandon of light.'

And all on the spot danced in a group singing,

Natarāja, Natarāja, Narthana Sundara
Natarāja,
etc. etc. etc.
Sambho Sadāsiva Mahāsiva Sadāsiva,
etc. etc. etc.

O reader! criticize not. Remember Chaitanya and his ecstatic rush after the moon in the water; the madman, the philosopher, and the lover are all alike, but yet this kind of love may not be the highest. Love is not above light, and light is not above love of the truest type. Love or light, it must not be transitory nor passionate outside, but eternal and peaceful, not like the volcano that bursts out in paroxysms of passion, but like the Himalayas that stand and shake not, like the Ganges that flows and dries not, like Natarāja himself who dances and never tires.

We have finished Nanda's tale. But for many a long night, let dreams of Natarāja and Nanda, the *Pariah Saint*, to whom a beautiful chapter of possibilities was opened, haunt us till our brains are filled with them and think by themselves, so to speak, of the teacher that ceases not to teach.

To the philosopher who transmutes everything into his philosophy and lends his own eternity to even fleeting things, Nanda is not merely a slave of Adhanur, and his life not merely a fancied legend or tradition. Nanda is none but the Atman, Ananda, or

2. The fourth state as distinguished from the three states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep.

Bliss which is God. 'He recognized that Happiness is Brahman; from Happiness, indeed, all these creatures are born; when born, they live through Happiness; when they depart, they enter into Happiness.' (*Taittirīya-Upaniṣad,* III.6.)

In mortal coils, it is the *jīva* playing its sport of the world, shaping the stars, sun and moon, and forging chains of pleasure and hate. That Nanda is born in a *parachery* signifies that we are dealing in flesh and blood, butchers one and all. The very thought of one's body is *pariahood,* and requires for its *prāyaschittam* (purification) a bath in the holy waters of the Upanishads. Like Nanda, we are slaves, bondsmen to our agricultural god, the belly, and slave to our passions, which are our hourly kinsmen and neighbours. Like Nanda, we have a thousand wicked deities to obey, our bodily comforts, superstitions, name, fame, power, pelf, etc.

The *parachery* is remote from the Brahmin quarters and the temple. '*Avidya* or ignorance (represented by the *parachery*), through which sprang all this universe, is only a quarter of the Paramātman. The remaining three-fourths (the Brahmin quarters, etc.) are immortal and filled with light.' 'I wear all this universe in a small fraction of Myself', said Srī Krishna (*Gītā,* X.42). Ignorance, even in its might, is small before knowledge that burns it away. The temple is visible, though at a distance; so there is some hope for man.

To Thirupankore we have all to go—to the Sivalingam, i.e., that which remains after deducting all phenomena, the final mark. There, it is Nandi (Siva's bull) that obstructs the view; Nandi is nothing but the four good tendencies of the mind: cheerfulness, calmness, patience and resignation, the four gatekeepers of heaven. It is through these that God is to be approached. But when the Presence is reached, these form a hindrance, as even the good tendencies of the mind must cease before its attaining to the state of the formless Brahman. By God's grace even these are dispensed with, and the first glimpse is obtained. And when the face of the Lord is once seen, woman is forgotten, wealth is neglected, and love for God grows on what it feeds.

The clay gods are the idols we worship; and it is love that rules the heart, and prompts the worship. It is a Brahmin (i.e. one that knows the Atman) that preaches about Chidambaram and Natarāja. These we are familiar with as the Atman and the sphere of Wisdom (see previous issue); and it is the Brāhmin's permission, i.e., the *guru's,* that is required to attain them. The *guru* tests the love, and love stands the test. And now who is great, who is small, who is *guru,* who is disciple? Nature rejoices in this equality (*samarasa*).

Nanda then triumphantly goes to Chidambaram to the Presence of the Ātman. The tell-tale kinsmen have all been subdued, there is a beautiful expression on the face; the wicked gods have long since been thrown away, i.e., the passions, the strife of the senses, and the gravitation of the earth have all been overcome. At this stage there are 'sermons in stones, and books in running brooks, and good in everything.' There is philosophy in the silent tower, in the high walls, in the open gate, in the temple and in Natarāja. The *Dīkshitars* are the gate-keepers of Heaven, the *śāstric* support and love required for entering the Presence. They pass Nanda through the ordeal of fire—the hair bridge, and similar things of the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka-Upaniṣad.*

And when Nanda rises from the fire, he is led to the temple, and there enters into the Presence, which the lying and the wicked

(Continued on page 630)

Incongruity

C. ACHUTHA MENON

A day for the lilies and roses,
Weeks for some odourless flowers;
For many the snow when it freezes;
Some get the summer showers.

Sunrise proclaimed by the notes of the fowl,
Daylight cheers and the flowers bloom,
But it hurts and blinds the bat and the owl;
For thieves of the night, it spells their doom.

Tied tight round the neck of a vessel,
A rope comes up with life-giving water:
Round the neck of a man, confined in a cell,
Both go down—they call it halter.

No arms to swim for the fish in the pond,
But two for man who walks on its shore;
No legs for the snake that must crawl on the ground,
Yet, two for birds that can glide and soar.

Incongruity runs through life's whole structure,
But enhances greatly the beauties of nature.❐

Man-making Education

SWAMI MUKTIDANANDA

A strong system of education—with a clear philosophy, methods and goals—is the very soul, the greaterst resource of every society's struggle to develop; but a confused and weak system of education is like a sick mind. India has been grappling, for the last fifty years, with the question of the right type of education her children need. The result has fallen quite short of expectation, at least in the matter of finalizing a system conforming to her age-old culture and also meeting current demands. The following is a study based on Swamiji's ideas on education—in general, and for India in particular, which we hope will draw the attention of all those who are feeling concerned about the future of this country.

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INTRODUCTION

The focus of man's practical and philosophical interests, from the stone age to the present, has shifted drastically from the other world, God, matter and the world to MAN. All developments are now evaluated in humanistic terms. Hence this age is known as the age of Humanism. Man and his values have become primary, and man's noblest study is considered to be 'Man' himself. Education, which is as old as man himself, has also undergone considerable changes to meet changing needs—physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual. The essence of all these is the concept of 'Man-making Education' propounded by Swami Vivekananda. In his own words, 'the ideal of all education, all training, should be Man-making.'[1] 'Man-making' means 'manhood-making' or the development of all the potentialities which every human being is naturally endowed with, and which distinguish men from animals.

There are two basic conceptions regarding the nature of human personality: 1) Dichotomy Doctrine, and 2) Trichotomy Doctrine.

In the **Dichotomy Doctrine,** found in ancient Greek thought and ancient Judeo-Christian tradition, the human personality consists of the body and the mind, the mind itself being considered the 'Soul' or 'Spirit'. The mind has three faculties: Reasoning, Feeling and Willing. Greeks regarded the full development of all these faculties as the full development of manhood. Christianity added one more dimension: The moral dimension. St. Augustine showed that mere faculties do not account for human nature. There is some cosmic moral force operating in the universe which influences human nature; and an awareness of this constitutes an essential aspect of manhood.

The **Trichotomy Doctrine** takes the view that man has body, mind and spirit. This is a characteristic of Indian thought. All schools of Hindu philosophy hold that the essential nature of man is the pure spirit known as the Atman, which is entirely different from the body and mind.

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* The frequently used word 'man' here includes 'woman'.

1. Swami Vivekananda, *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda,* (Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, vol. 2, p. 15.

In the different Hindu scriptures, this trichotomy is expressed as *sthūla* or gross body, *sūkṣma* or *liṅga-śarīra* or subtle body, and the Atman. Man has been identifying himself with the gross body, and is therefore bound. The capacity to realize the Atman lies dormant in all people, and only with the development of this inherent capacity can man be said to have attained to full man-hood. As Swami Vivekananda puts it, 'Each Soul is potentially divine, the goal is to manifest this divinity already in man.'[2] There could be no greater goal for man than to identify himself with what he essentially is—Divinity within—instead of with what he apparently feels himself to be.

MAN-MAKING PROCESS

Thus, man-making, i.e., the development to full man-hood, includes three processes:

i. Development of all the faculties and capacities of the mind,
ii. moral perfection, and
iii. development of the potential divinity.

The first process is now-a-days called self-actualization, the third one is known as Self-realization or *Ātma-sākśātkāra;* the second process, the moral perfection may be regarded as a connecting link between the first and the third.

Self-Actualization
(Development of all the Faculties)

The urge in man to seek and express higher truths, to share love, to create beautiful things and to experience higher forms of happiness has been called 'self-actualization'—a term introduced by Goldstein and Karen Horney and popularized by Abraham Maslow, a humanistic psychologist. People in the world are unhappy not because of lack of food and clothing but because of their failure in self-actualization. The creative urge in man seems to have no end. 'Man's productivity moves from potentiality to actuality in such a way that everything actualized has potentialities for further actualization. This is the basic structure of progress', says Paul Tillich. Self-actualization leads to self-fulfilment, and such a person alone is valuable to society and contributes more to universal life. This then should be the aim of meaningful life and of meaningful education. Development implies unfolding of the whole personality, i.e., development of all the faculties: *intellect, emotion* and *will.*

Study of
Total Development of Personality

The present trend in psychological thinking is to regard development as a total process involving the whole personality. It is also being recognized that in this total development the unconscious plays a vital, positive and constructive role. Freud's chief mistake was that he regarded the unconscious as nothing but a store house of evil. But through the efforts of Jung, Adler and 'humanistic psychologists' such as Allport, Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogor and others, it is now widely recognized that the unconscious is also the store house of all religious striving and symbolization. This recognition has led to the view that the basic factor in human development is the actualization of the full potential of the unconscious most of which remain unknown and unavailable to ordinary people. It is the tapping and harnessing of creativity, the life-giving powers of the unconscious, that humanistic psychologists have termed self-actualization.

Self-actualization in Terms of
Value-fulfilment

Every person has what Maslow calls 'basic needs', which are organized in a hierarchical order. According to Maslow, the

2. Ibid. vol. 1, p. 257.

lower basic needs are: (a) physiological needs such as hunger etc., (b) need of safety, (c) need of love and belongingness, and (d) the egoic need of self-esteem. If these lower needs are not fulfilled, serious disorders such as neurosis may result.

Then there are the higher needs, which include the creative urge, and the cognitive, aesthetic, and ethical goals. These higher needs belong to the category of values and ideals. The urge for value fulfilment is one of the most distinctive attributes of humanity. Says another psychologist, 'Without ideals man is not fully human; for, the essence of humanness is the capacity to envision and actualize ideal ends.' The urge to realize ideals, to seek value fulfilment, is a higher form of creativity, and when this creative urge is dammed up, or 'repressed', it can lead to personality problems such as meaninglessness, boredom and unfulfilment. In highly evolved people the higher needs become so dominant that they often sacrifice the lower needs for the fulfilment of the higher needs. Their primary concern is to attain psychological maturity and full manhood and, through some creative activity, the welfare of humanity as well. This is what is meant by self-actualization. Man cannot attain full manhood unless his higher needs are fulfilled, that is to say, unless his faculties and capacities as a human being are (a) *developed,* (b) *refined* to the fullest extent, and (c) *utilized in the service of fellow men* through creative work. This development of *complete manhood,* the full dimension of humanity, should be the chief aim of education.

Moral Perfection— Swami Vivekananda's Unique Theory of Ethics

Morality is the fundamental characteristic of humanity distinguishing man from animals. Moral perfection is imperative for the all-round development of human personality. For the full expression of the higher creative abilities and other noble human faculties and also for the unfoldment and manifestation of potential divinity, a free flow and abundant supply of psycho-physical energy is very essential. Any kind of immoral behaviour not only obstructs this free flow of psycho-physical energy but also disturbs inner harmony of life; and thereby it inhibits the process of both self-actualization and self-realization. Hence Swami Vivekananda emphasized the need for moral perfection in his philosophy of man-making education. He also evolved a unique theory of ethics through which he placed before mankind a universal moral ideal, a common code of ethics, that would free men from bigotry, superstition and fear, and inspire faith in their own intrinsic worth and capacities. So, the study of Swami Vivekananda's unique theory of ethics is very pertinent and significant in this context. It can be briefly stated as follows:

Vedanta holds that consciously or unconsciously the entire humanity, in fact the whole universe, is heading towards spiritual freedom because it is the very basis of all existence. So, spiritually we find there is oneness as regards the goal. Society is drawing nearer, cultures are getting closer; the world, owing to improved communications, is getting smaller day by day. Morality was the only field in which there was variance. Swamiji saw that the first task, therefore, was to identify certain fundamental principles of morality common to all men. The discovery and restatement of these common bases of morality is very necessary in view of the tendency of the present-day society towards universal culture.

Hinduism considers 'ignorance' (*ajñānam*) as the cause of man's present state of bondage and suffering. Ignorance is a pseudo-superimposition on the Self. So, immorality, known as *pāpa,* is only an error.

When the cloud of ignorance is dispelled, the sun of Self, Atman, will stand revealed. By contrast, Christianity and other religions regard 'sin' as the cause of man's fallen state. By sin is meant disobedience to God's commands. Sin has distorted the soul so much that man cannot save himself. But to the Indian, even a worst sinner can wake up and become pure and perfect again. The Upanishadic sages had, centuries earlier, discovered the true nature of man to be the Atman which can never be tainted by sin. Man is not a sinner, nor is he fallen. He wrongly feels so, because he is not aware of his real divine nature. Man should be moral because he cannot be otherwise. Purity, perfection, etc., and other divine attributes are intrinsic in man because they are the attributes of the Atman. He need not acquire newly any virtue extraneously, but has only to manifest that which is inherent in him. Swamiji made Atman the basis of ethics.

Manifesting Potential Divinity

Self-actualization discussed earlier does not exhaust all the potentialities of man. Although it makes his life meaningful, it is not enough in itself to bring the ultimate fulfilment and final freedom of the human soul. This is because human personality has a transcendental dimension known as the Atman. This takes us to another factor in life which lies beyond the pale of ordinary education, but which education should prepare us for: *Transcendence.*

Now let us try to understand what exactly is the philosophy behind this most significant doctrine of potential divinity of Swamiji. As explained in the preceding paragraphs, human personality is trichotomous, consisting of body, mind and spirit. The *saṁskāras* and evil actions taint only the mind, not the Atman which is ever-pure, self-luminous and blissful. Evil only veils the Atman or prevents its manifestation, but does not taint it. That is why Swamiji said, 'Each soul is potentially Divine.' Man as he is does not appear to be divine, but he holds in himself the divine potentiality. The purpose of an ethical and religious life is to enable him to unfold and manifest this potentiality. That is why Swamiji has defined religion as 'The manifestation of the divinity already in man'. Religion in India means a way of life that favours self-realization.

Ordinary development and self-actualization are related only to the body and the mind. The Atman is beyond the reach of the ordinary thinking-process, it can be realized only by transcending the mind. The Atman is intrinsically free. It is the Atman that gives rise to the notion of freedom. Complete freedom can be attained only through self-realization, i.e., the direct experience of Atman. Furthermore, since the Atman is inseparable from the Supreme Cosmic Self known as Brahman, only through self-realization can man experience this basic solidarity of creation and understand the real basis of love and universal brotherhood.

Swami Vivekananda reshaped the Atman-doctrine into a powerful tool for social change. He used it to arouse the conscience of the educated and affluent people, on the one hand, and, on the other, to awaken the dormant power in the poor and the downtrodden. Furthermore, he adopted the complementary doctrine of the supreme Self or Brahman to meet the practical needs of the mundane world: through it he unified human love and divine love, service of man and worship of God, humanism and religion, into an integral discipline capable of bringing about one's own salvation and the welfare of the world. This contribution of Swami Vivekananda is quite well known.

The above-discussed three processes involved in man-making or development of full manhood, namely, (a) development of

all the faculties and capacities of the mind, (b) moral perfection, and (c) development of potential divinity, are included in Swamiji's teachings on education. The first process is covered by Swamiji's definition, 'Education is the manifestation of perfection already in man',[3] the third process is covered by the definition, 'Religion is the manifestation of the Divinity already in man',[4] while the second process is covered by Swamiji's unique theory of ethics.

Meaning of Education

i. *Etymological meaning:* Education comes from the Latin *educere,* which means 'to draw out'; that is, to draw out the latent faculties and powers from the mind. This comes near to the Swamiji's idea 'manifestation'.

ii. *Two levels of meaning:* Education has two levels of meaning: (a) social and (b) individual. At the social level, education serves as the chief process of transmission of culture from generation to generation. At the individual level education serves as the chief means of self-development and adaptation.

a. Social Level

Education and the transmission of culture

Education is primarily a civilizing and socializing process. All civilizations have been built on the foundation of a certain system of education, formal or informal, and it is chiefly to the strength of education that civilizations owe their continuity. All that was great in ancient India was achieved almost entirely through a religious system of education centred on the imitation of the Guru. A study of various civilizations and their continuity reveals that education is the medium of transmission of culture. 'heritage' and 'socialization', as the social scientists call it, are its other forms. In man, communication is not merely an exchange of information or expression of feelings but something more important—the transmission of culture. And culture, is, as Clyde Kluckon puts it, society's complete design for living. It is this transmission that has given an unprecedented tempo to human evolution. The chief instrument of this psycho-social higher evolutionary progression is the rapid transmission of culture through education. Through education the achievements of thousands of people over several centuries can be quickly transmitted to vast numbers of a new generation within a short span of time.

This, then, is what education really means: the communication of culture through creative participation. The Harvard realist philosopher, Ralph Barton Perry, explains it as follows:

> Through education men acquire the civilization of the past, and are enabled both to take part in the civilization of the present and make the civilization of the future. In short the purpose of education is three fold: inheritance, participation and contribution.

For practical purposes, however, education has to be defined in a more restricted way, at the individual level. At this level the chief purposes of education are *self-development* and *adaptation.*

b. Individual Level

i. Education and Self-development

For a human child, growth does not mean mere physical growth but the development of its inherent capacities and potentialities. This inner development is of the nature of the unfolding of the self. That is to say, true development is self-development.

'Extrinsic' and 'Intrinsic' education: In extrinsic education the emphasis is on exter-

3. Ibid. vol. 4, p. 358.
4. Ibid.

nal factors such as books, curriculum, work, economic benefits, etc. It leads to what David Riesman termed 'other-directed' development. In intrinsic education the emphasis is on internal factors such as self-knowledge, attitude, temperament, fulfilment, etc. It leads to what David Riesman termed 'inner-directed' development.

ii. Education and adaptation

Development constitutes only one of the two main aspects of life. The other aspect is adaptation. For man, adaptation means adjustment to a highly fluctuating social environment. This environment is an extremely complex web of inter-personal relationships, which is controlled by various psychological, economic, social and political forces. Since these forces are ever changing, the establishment of an equilibrium-adjustment with the social environment is a very difficult task. One of the important purposes of education is to help a person adjust himself to the society of which he is a part.

In extrinsic education this adjustment is sought through the manifestation of external forces, men and material. When carried to extreme limits, this manifestation leads to impoverishment of one's inner life, unfulfilment and meaninglessness. In this development and adjustment, and in learning and experience, the self occupies a pivotal place. Intrinsic education directly deals with the self and brings about all the desirable results through a transformation of consciousness.

Most of the modern systems of education are extrinsic in character and do not deal with the self directly. Their sole purpose is the attainment of success in the world, not the enhancement of human values or the enrichment of human personality. Since knowledge is power, acquisition of knowledge has assumed enormous importance in modern times. The enormous complexity of modern life, and the multiplication of gadgets and machines, have made the imparting of skill and training and the imparting of social guidance equally vital concerns. Hence the *cultivation of knowledge, training, guidance*—these constitute the three chief practical aims in educational planning in the modern world.

The Philosophy of Education

The philosophy of education is the field of philosophical enquiry, which looks at education as a whole and tries to define broadly the values that constitute the ultimate aim of education. It is clear from our earlier discussion on the meaning of education that, in a wider sense it is a process which goes on throughout the life of an individual, both consciously and unconsciously, enriching experience and knowledge. So, there is an intimate inseparable relation between education and life. Education, in a restricted practical sense, is a consciously directed process for the realization of some definite ends. The philosophy of education also includes the study of the various psychological aspects of the educative process involved in learning and teaching, and their social implications.

Finally, the main factors which determine educational philosophy are: (1) philosophy of life, (2) concept of man's essential nature as a conscious and creative being, and (3) his destiny upon earth.

(to be continued)

The world is a dangerous place to live in not because of those who do evil but because of those who watch and let it happen.

—*Albert Einstein*

Travelling Through Emerson's India

DR. UMESH PATRI

The following is an interesting and informative study of the key spiritual ideas of the famous American Transcendentalist, Ralph Waldo Emerson. The author, citing various sources, has tried to substantiate the generally held belief that Emerson was primarily and profoundly influenced by Hindu Vedantic ideas.

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It is a well-known fact that the most decisive influence on the American Transcendentalists was that of the Orient which constituted the influence of Persia, India and China. By Oriental was chiefly meant India, and that too Hinduism. F.I. Carpenter, therefore, has justly observed: 'To Emerson's mind, Hindu philosophy expressed the essence of Orientalism. Often he identified the whole orient with it. When speaking vaguely of "Asia", he was usually thinking of Hindusthan.'[1]

More than any other Transcendentalists such as Henry David Thoreau, Amos Bronson Alcott, Margaret Fuller, Samuel Johnson or Moncure Conway, Emerson was most influenced by the Indian scriptures. His initial rebellion against Christianity in its various forms prompted him to find a ready refuge in the idealism of Hinduism. It opened a new vista and a window for Emerson, who till the end of his life remained with it. Essentially his temperament was that of a Hindu and a Brahmin, a fact which has been accepted by many Hindu scholars. In the memorial symposium published after Emerson's death, entitled *The Genius and Character of Emerson,* Pratap Chunder Mozoomdar calls Emerson: '...the best of Brahmans.'[2] He again remarks: 'Amidst this ceaseless, sleepless din and clash of western materialism, this heat and restless energy, the character of Emerson shines upon India serene as the evening star. He seems to some of us to have been a geographical mistake. He ought to have been born in India. Perhaps Hindus were closer kinsmen to him than his own nation, because every typical Hindu is a child of Nature.'[3]

Emerson himself had felt this spiritual inclination and affinity for the Hindus. He received so much from India that throughout his writing he admitted his indebtedness to Indian thought in quite unambiguous terms. For him the idealism of the Hindus propounded in the Upaniṣads, the *Bhagavad-Gītā* and other Indian scriptures was based on the most fundamental concepts. Whatever he had read about Platonism and Neo-Platonism was rather a corroboration of the concepts he had already inculcated into

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1. Frederic Ives Carpenter, *Emerson and Asia,* rpt. New York: Haskell House, 1968, p. 103.
2. Pratap Chunder Mozoomdar, 'Emerson as seen from India', *Concord Harvest,* ed. K. W. Cameron, Hartford: Trascendental Books, 1970, p. 187.
3. Ibid. p. 186.

himself from Hinduism. And it is not vice-versa, that the idealism he learnt from Plato and Neo-Platonism was confirmed by Hinduism.

He turned eastward, that is, towards India, very early in life, when he was a young boy quite in his teens, the time in which one ordinarily dreams of other things, not metaphysics. Emerson started probing certain fundamental issues of life and turned to India for an answer. The year 1820 may very well be regarded as the beginning of his interest in the Orient. He was introduced to Orientalism by his loving aunt, Mary Moody Emerson, who sent him 'A Hymn to Nārāyena' by Sir William Jones.[4] Emerson copied a portion of the poem in his diary and wrote a few sentences by way of comments, a fact which testifies to his early interest in Orientalism. After reading this, Emerson was very much moved by its thought content and wrote back to his aunt on 10 June 1822: 'I am curious to read your Hindu mythologies. One is apt to lament over indolence and ignorance, when we read some those sanguine students of the Eastern antiquities, who seem to think that all the books of knowledge, and all the wisdom of Europe twice told, lie hidden in the treasures of the Brahmins....'[5]

During the next decade or so, Emerson's interest in Orientalism grew systematically and became more and more sharply defined. He read a large number of extracts including excerpts from the *Mahābhārata* [his reference to sage Vyasa spelt as 'Viasa' is significant] from various Indian philosophical books and according to Manmohan Singh's account, he read about nineteen articles on India published in the *Edinburgh Review* during the year 1821.[6] In fact, he had no opportunity to read any complete full-length Hindu scriptures till 1836, the year in which he read the *Code of Manu*, translated by William Jones. In the same year, his famous book, *Nature*, which contains the salient idea of Indian Idealism was written and published.

We may mention in this connection that Emerson and his colleagues had no knowledge of Sanskrit, which prevented them from reading the Hindu scriptures in the original. For their reading they had to depend on whatever English translations were available then. Arrival of a translation of Indian scripture in Boston was therefore news for the Transcendentalists and always brought fresh air to them. Emerson and his group owed a deep debt of gratitude to the translators of the Indian scriptures, the translation of which was started with seriousness and in an organized manner by the Asiatic Society of Bengal of which Sir William Jones was the President, and Viceroy Warren Hastings was the Chief patron. The other notable names of the translators are Henry Thomas Colebroke, Sir Charles Wilkins, Horace Hayman Wilson and Brian Houghton Hodgson. The other notable translator and expositor of Indian scriptures, especially of the Vedas, was Frederic Max Müller, a great name among the Orientalists who supplied a good number of texts to the Transcendentalists. But for these pioneering works by the early Orientalists, the Transcendentalists would have been deprived of the wealth of Indian wisdom and, consequently, their theories must have suffered a setback.

Now, coming back to Emerson's reading of Indian scriptures, one finds that the next decade was of enormous importance as far as influence of India on Emerson is con-

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4. Sir William Jones, Fall trans. 'A Hymn to Nārāyena', *American Transcendental Quarterly*, 1973, vol. I, No. 20, p. 578–83.
5. *The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Ralph L. Rusk, 1939, (rpt. New York and London: Columbia Univ. Press, 1966), vol. I, pp. 116–17. [Hereafter *Letters*].
6. Manmohan Singh, 'Emerson and India,' Diss. Univ. of Pennsylvania, 1964, p. 26.

cerned. He read *Hitopadeśa* and, most importantly, the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, which he first mistook for a Buddhist scripture. Writing to Elizabeth Hore in 1845, he says: 'The only other event is the arrival in Concord of the *Bhagavad Geeta*, the much renowned book of Buddhism (?).[7]

Before reading the full text of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, Emerson had some idea of it, most probably from Victor Cousin's lectures entitled *Cours de L'histoire de la Philosophie*, translated by H.G. Linberg, in April 1828. Emerson acknowledged his first acquaintance with the *Bhagavad-Gītā* in a letter written to William Emerson on 24 May 1831.[8] Afterwards he read the whole text of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, which cast the greatest single influence on him. He wrote: 'I owed, —my friend and I, —owed a magnificent day to the *Bhagavad Geeta*. It was the first of books; it was as if an empire spoke to us, nothing small or unworthy but large, serene, consistent, the voice of an old intelligence which in another age and climate had pondered and thus disposed of the same questions which exercise us.'[9] The central concept of his philosophy, the concept of the Over-Soul, in all probability, is conceived by his reading of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* where the Supreme Spirit is called *Adhyātman* or *Paramātman*.[10] Over-Soul seems to be a literal translation of these two words. Emerson deals with the concept of immortality of the soul in his essays, 'Immortality' and 'Illusion'.

The other Hindu concepts which profoundly influenced Emerson were the concepts of *Māyā*, 'Fate and Law of Karma', 'Rebirth', 'Transmigration of Soul', 'transcendence and immanence of Divinity', 'pantheism', 'mystic description of the ultimate Reality embedded in the Upanishadic method of *Neti, Neti* (not this, not this)'. Of these the idea of *'neti'* is an important one which influenced Emerson most. The nature of ultimate Reality, which is Infinite, cannot be grasped by the mind which is finite and limited. The mind can only operate in the field of the known. Hence, the process of arriving at the ultimate Reality involves the denial of whatever is known by the mind and is regarded in ignorance as the ultimate Reality. By discarding the false categories one after another (through *neti, neti, ...*), one may eventually reach the highest state which is that of no-mind. This approach through negation is at the very heart of Vedanta. A well-known Vedantic verse may be quoted in this context: 'He (the Brahman) is neither good nor evil, nor man nor animal, nor woman nor man nor neuter. He cannot be included in any of the above categories. Neither he is quality nor action, nor effect nor cause. After denying all these attributions, whatsoever is left is That.' (Trans. mine).[11]

Like the concept of *'neti'*, the concept of *Māyā* or illusion influenced Emerson a great deal. *Māyā* implies that Brahman is the ultimate Reality and the phenomenal world is not ultimately real or in other words, has no *pāramārthika sattā*. The word *Māyā* is translated as 'illusion', which is not to be confused with 'delusion'. *Māyā* is a very old Hindu concept referring to the creation of all manifest things from ignorance (*avidyā*), through the two processes of (1) veiling (*āvaraṇa*) the Reality and, (2) building on the basis of the veiling by projection (*vikṣepa*). When a rope is taken to be not a rope, it is *Māyā* power of veiling, and when the rope is erroneously taken for a snake, it is the *Māyā's*

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7. *Letters*, vol. III, p. 290.
8. *Letters*, vol. I, pp. 322–3.
9. *Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 1909–14, ed. E. W. Emerson and W. E. Forbes, (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin), vol. VII, p. 511. [Hereafter *Journals*].
10. *The Bhagavad Gita*, trans. Swami Chidbhavanand, 1965 (rpt. Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Tapovanam, 1969), ch. 8, sl. 2, p. 452. [Hereafter *Gītā*].
11. *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, vol. VII, ch. 2, sl. 24.

power of projection. This is embodied in Shankara's well-known verse: *Brahma satyam jagan-mithyā jīvo brahmaiva nāparaḥ*: Brahman is the Reality and the world an illusion, and the individual self is not different from Brahman. (Trans. mine.) Emerson in two of his poems 'Illusion' and 'Māyā' gave hints to the above Hindu concept. The following passage from 'Maia' demonstrates this idea:

> Illusion works impenetrable,
> Weaving webs innumerable,
> Her gay pictures never fail,
> Crowds each on other, veil on veil,
> Charmer who will be believed
> By man who thirsts to be deceived.[12]

In 1861, he wrote in his *Journals* about the *Māyā* of Vishnu: '...in connection with the subject of illusions...the Hindus alone have treated this...with the sufficient breadth in their legends of the successive Maias of Vishnu. With them, youth, age, property, condition, events, persons, self are only successive Maias, through which Vishnu mocks and instructs the soul.'[13] Again he said in another context that the world is born of *Māyā*.[14] The poem 'Hamatraya' also, it seems, has been influenced by the concept of *Māyā* where the difference between 'I and You' or 'Mine and Yours'[15] has been regarded as ignorance. In fact, there are a good many passages in his *Journals* and essays which demonstrate that he had a comprehensive conception of the Hindu idea of *Māyā*. In his essay 'Illusion', for example, he writes: 'I find men victims of illusion in all parts of life. Children, youths, adults and old men, all are led by one bauble or another. Yoganidra, the goddess of Illusion, Proteus or Momus, or Gylfi's Mocking,—for the Power has many names,— is stronger than the Titans, stronger than Apollo.'[16] The affinity between Emerson's concept of *Māyā* and the Vedantic concept of *Māyā* is so close that one is inclined to disagree with S.P. Das when he says that Emerson's concept of *Māyā* was influenced by a concept in the Bible.[17]

The Hindu concept of *niyati*, which means fatality or destiny, is another concept which Emerson has discussed in many contexts. Fate is also called *daiva* because it is a part of the divine law given effect by gods. It implies an inexplicable as well as an inexorable decree which human beings are forced to accept. Fate, truly understood, is the effect of past *karma* (action) which must happen. In the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, Sri Krishna tells Arjuna: 'None can ever remain really actionless even for a moment; for, everyone is helplessly driven to action by the *guṇas*, born of Prakriti.'[18] Emerson accepts the law of Karma in general, but does not seem to accept the deterministic aspect of the above concept. This kind of disagreement suggests that he had properly understood the concept. He wrote in one of his journal entries: 'As long as I am weak, I shall talk of Fate; whenever the God fills me with his fullness, I shall see the disappearance of Fate.'[19] His essay 'Fate' also contains his negative attitude.

His attitude to fate was influenced by Hindu, Greek and Mohammedan ideas. The law of Karma, which is closely related to fate, gets great prominence in his thinking. Karma is the law of Laws and is central to both Buddhism and Hinduism. It is the principle of 'universal causality resulting from action'. It is the 'cosmic Law of debit and

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12. R. W. Emerson, *Complete Works* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1903), vol. IX, p. 348. [Hereafter *Works*].
13. *Journals*, vol. IX, p. 302.
14. *Journals*, vol. X, p. 159.
15. *Works*, vol. IX, p. 36.
16. *Works*, vol. VI, p. 313.
17. S.P. Das, 'Emerson's Debt to Hindu Thought: A Reappraisal', Diss. Gurunanak Univ., Amritsar, 1977, p. 277.
18. *Gītā*, ch. 3, sl. 5, p. 215.
19. *Journals*, vol. VI, pp. 189, 317; vol. VII, p. 8.

credit for good and evil, a Law of moral retribution, eternally recurring'. Its central assumption is: what you do to others will be done to you. The circumstances and conditions of a person's birth will be due to his actions in his past lives, and his future will be determined by his actions in this life. His reading of the *Code of Manu* enabled him to share this fundamental Hindu belief. The logic involved in the law of Karma aroused in him great appreciation. The doctrine of compensation discussed in his essay, 'Compensation', bears ample evidence to this. The law of Karma in its central aspects has been criticized by many for its anti-Christian stance. But Emerson understood the simple logic involved in the law that, whatever you sow, that you will reap. The Hindus asserted this logic by saying that all human sufferings had their origin in *Prārabdha Karma,* which means the resultant of the deeds of one's past lives. Suffering in this life is only the immediate and perceptible fruit (*phala*) of action in another life as well in this life. Like the Hindus, Emerson also believed in rebirth and transmigration of soul.

The doctrine of rebirth is a necessary corollary to the law of Karma and an important Hindu and Buddhist concept, which assumes that living beings including human beings undergo a series of incarnations, rebirths. These constitute a cycle which comes to an end only when one realizes the ultimate Reality or, as the Buddhists say, one's Buddha nature. If one does not reach the goal in one life, there is always another chance. There is no eternal damnation if one cannot reach the goal in one life. As *Bhagavad-Gītā* puts it, a man who has fallen from Yoga due to some fault on his part is born again with better opportunity and in a more congenial environment:

> *Prāpya puṇyakṛtāṁ lokān*
> *uṣitvā śāśvatīḥ samāḥ;*
> *Śucīnāṁ śrīmatāṁ gehe*
> *yogabhraṣṭo'bhijāyate.*
>
> *Having attained the worlds of the righteous and having lived there for countless years, he who falls from yoga is reborn in the house of the pure and prosperous.*[20]

The doctrine of rebirth also implies that if a man does evil deeds he may have a non-human body in the next life.

The idea of rebirth is sprinkled throughout Emerson's works and the *Journals*. He writes: 'The transmigration of souls is no fable....'[21] Faith in transmigration of souls, though antithetical to Christianity, was most welcome to him because it countered the notion of finality inherent in Christianity; besides, it embodied a vision of correction through successive stages of development until one achieves beatitude and divine bliss.

One point must be noted here that some scholars are of the opinion that Emerson, independently or through influences other than the Orient, had formed and developed these concepts into which the Hindu concepts were subsequently assimilated. Carl T. Jackson, for instance, subscribed to such a view. He remarks: 'Of course, he had already arrived at these concepts before developing a wide and sympathetic interest in the Orient, but it is evident that he quickly assimilated the Hindu formulations into his thought.'[22] But, as I have shown by quoting external evidences, Emerson developed these concepts after reading Indian scriptures, without which he could not have developed his concepts clearly. ❐

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20. *Gita,* ch. 6, sl. 41, pp. 403–04.
21. *Works,* vol. II, p. 32, 'History'.
22. Carl T. Jackson, 'Oriental Ideas in American Thought,' in *Dictionary of the History of Ideas,* ed. Philip P. Wiener (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1973), vol. III, p. 430.

Swami Vivekananda and Islam

H.S. SARKAR

Love of a realized soul is like the gentle rain from heaven. It benefits all equally. It is not conditioned by doctrines, creeds or dogmas. Such a person reverences people of all sects, ascetics and householders. By reference to incidents in Swami Vivekananda's life, Sri H.S. Sarkar brings out Swamiji's warm relations with the Muslims who came in contact with him. He also refers to the views on Islam held by Swamiji, he calls the most revolutionary in character.

Swami Vivekananda held, 'In essentials all religions are one.'[1] According to Romain Rolland: 'To him religion was the fellow citizen of every thinking man and its only enemy was intolerance.'[2] The great Swami found the ancient message of Krishna as 'one harmonizing three—Buddha's, Christ's and Mohammed's.'[3]

Like all other religions that preceded it, 'Mohammedanism came as a message for the masses,'[4] when society was besieged with 'sin, idolatry and mock worship, superstitions and human sacrifices, and so on.'[5] Its simple message is one of equality and love.

Swami Vivekananda was full of respectful admiration for the Holy Koran. He said, 'There is one thing very remarkable about the Koran. Even to this day, it exists as it was found eleven hundred years ago. It retains its pristine purity and is free from interpolations.'[6]

Wherever Swami Vivekananda went, he was sought after by people of all faiths. During his stay in Mysore as a guest of the Maharaja, Abdul Rahman Saheb, a Muslim Councillor of the State, met him. To his utter surprise, he found that the Hindu sannyasi was well-versed in Muslim scriptures, not knowing that the Swami 'had made the Koran an intellectual and spiritual possession some years back.'[7] Abdul Rahman often came to Swamiji to have his doubts concerning the Koran cleared.

In the course of their wanderings in the Himalayas, the Swami and his brother disciple Akhandananda reached the precincts of Almora. Overpowered by hunger Vivekananda almost fainted and sank to the ground. Akhandananda went in search of food and water. The keeper of a muslim cemetery nearby, a fakir named Zulfikar Ali, offered Vivekananda a cucumber, which was the only food available with him. Vivekananda was too weak to eat it himself and, therefore, requested the fakir to put the cucumber into his mouth. He was reluctant to do so ostensibly because he was a Muslim. Vivekananda understood his predicament and said with a smile, 'That does not matter at all; are we not all brothers?'[8] The fakir fed

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1. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda,* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1977), vol. 1, p. 318; hereafter CW.
2. Romain Rolland, *The Life of Vivekananda and the Universal Gospel,* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1979), p. 257.
3. CW., vol. 1, p. 481.
4. CW., p. 483.
5. CW., p. 481.
6. *The Life of Swami Vivekananda by His Eastern and Western Disciples,* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1989), vol. 1, p. 265; hereafter *The Life.*
7. *The Life,* vol. 1, p. 322.
8. *The Life,* vol. 1, p. 251.

the Swami the cucumber and the latter felt refreshed. Narrating this incident, Vivekananda would say, 'The man really saved my life. I had never felt so exhausted.'[9]

In the course of his wanderings in Kashmir, Vivekananda once felt very thirsty. He called at a farmhouse and asked a Muslim lady there for a glass of water, and after having drunk it asked her in a mild tone, 'And what is your religion, Mother?' 'I thank Allah, Sir,' the woman had replied with triumph in her voice, 'by the grace of Allah, I am a Mussalman.' She felt happy to see him,...and showed all courtesy to him and his companions.

In February 1891, a Moulavi Saheb met Swami Vivekananda at Alwar and became very devoted to him. He felt a keen desire to invite Swamiji to his home and feed him. For the occasion, he wanted to have all the furniture in his drawing room washed and food cooked by Brahmins in vessels brought from their houses. No such arrangement was considered necessary by Swamiji. He visited the house of the Moulavi. The latter entertained him and felt blessed. Following the example of the Moulavi many devout Muslims cordially invited Swamiji to their homes.

On his visit to Hyderabad, Swamiji was received at the Railway Station by, among others, Shams-ul-Ulama Syed Ali Bilgrami, Nawab Imad Jung Bahadur, Nawab Dula Khan Bahadur, Nawab Imad Nawab Jung Bahadur and Nawab Secunder Nawab Jung Bahadur. Later Swamiji 's conversation with Nawab Bahadur Sir Khurshid Jah, the brother-in-law of the Nizam, at the latter's palace lasted for more than two hours. Sir Khursid Jah was well known for the catholicity of his views and had visited all the Hindu places of pilgrimage from the Himalayas to Cape Comarin. Swamiji discoursed on the contents of Hinduism, Christianity and Islam. Sir Khursid Jah was so impressed with the eloquence of Swamiji that he offered to give him one thousand rupees towards the passage expenses for his proposed visit to America to 'preach the gospel of the Eternal Religion'. Swamiji declined the offer saying: 'Your Highness, the time has not yet come. When the command comes from on high, I shall make you aware of it!'[10] Sir Ashman Jah, K.C.S.I., the Prime Minister of Hyderabad, offered also to fund his proposed visit to America. Thus the offer of help came as much from Muslims as from Hindus.

During his wanderings, Swami Vivekananda not only visited Hindu, Buddhist or Jain temples, but he also offered prayers at churches and mosques. He visited Mecca Masjid, the tomb of Baba Saraf-ud-din and the famous Dargah of the renowned Muslim saint, Moinuddin Chisti. He used to bow down to all the prophets and gods—past, present and future—firmly believing that 'That which exists is One; sages call It by various names.'

In 1892, Swamiji came to the house of Prof. Sundararama Iyer in Trivandrum, accompanied by a Muslim guide. He had taken nothing but a little milk during the previous two days. But upon his arrival the first thing he asked for was the arrangement for his Muslim attendant's meal. He thought of his own needs only after the Muslim peon had taken his food. The incident shows Swamiji's concern for all men irrespective of their caste, creed and religion.

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9. Ibid.

10. *The Life*, vol. 1, p. 376.

the famous Dargah of the renowned Muslim saint, Moinuddin Chisti. He used to bow down to all the prophets and gods, past, present and future, firmly believing that, 'That which exists is One; sages call It by various names (*Ekam sat viprā bahudhā vadanti*). He said, 'All religions, under whatever name they may be called, either Hindu, Buddhist, Mohammadan, or Christian, have the same God, and he who derides any one of these derides his own God!'[11]

Swami Vivekananda was full of admiration for Muslim art and architecture. Taj Mahal captivated him. To his mind, 'The Taj was a Shakuntala in marble.'[12] He called Akbar 'the king of kings'. He was appreciative of Akbar's attempt to establish the Divine Religion (Din Illahi) which could be practised by Hindus, Christians and Parsees as well as by Mohammedans. Swamiji was against ritualism and priestly tyranny in religions. Among all the religions in the world, Islam is perhaps the most revolutionary in character. Swamiji said, 'Mohammadanism is the only religion that has completely broken down the idea of the priest. The leader of prayer stands with his back to the people, and only the reading of the Koran may take place from the pulpit.'[13] Radicalism characterizes this approach.

One more instance of Swamiji's love of humanity may be cited here. At Mount Abu, he once spent a few days with a Muslim Vakil (lawyer). One day at his invitation, Munshi Jagmohanlal, Private Secretary to the Raja of Khetri, came to meet Swamiji. Immediately on meeting the Swami, Jagmohanlal asked how the Swami, being a Hindu monk, could live with a Muslim who might even touch his food. Swamiji then and there flared up and said, 'Sir, what do you mean? I am a Sannyasin. I am above all your social conventions. I can dine even with a Bhangi (sweeper). I am not afraid of God, for He sanctions it; I am not afraid of the scriptures, for they allow it, but I am afraid of you people and your society. You know nothing of God and the scriptures. I see Brahman everywhere, manifested even in the meanest creature. For me, there is nothing high or low. Shiva, Shiva.'[14]

To Swamiji, India was not the land of the Hindus only; it belonged to all. He frequently used in his conversations, the phrase, 'My brother the Mohammedan'. His mission was to make men and women perfect. He repeatedly said: 'It is a man-making religion that we want. It is man-making theories that we want. It is man-making education all round that we want.'

To Swamiji, India was not the land of the Hindus only; it belonged to all. He frequently used in his conversations, the phrase, 'My brother the Mohammedan'. His mission was to make men and women perfect. He repeatedly said: 'It is a man-making religion that we want. It is man-making theories that we want. It is man-making education all round that we want.'[15] Further, focussing on the concept of the practical Vedanta, Swamiji said, 'The living God is within you, and yet you are building churches and temples and believing all sorts of imaginary nonsense. The only God to worship is the human soul in the human body. Of course, all animals are temples too, but man is the highest, the Taj Mahal of

11. *CW.*, vol. 1, p. 350.
12. *The Life*, vol. 1, p. 392.
13. *The Life*, vol. 2, p. 366.
14. *The Life*, vol. 1, p. 280.
15. Swami Ranganathananda, *Eternal Values for a Changing Society*, (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidyabhavan, 1986), vol. 3, 'Education for Human Excellence', p. 224.

temples. If I cannot worship in that, no other temple will be of any advantage.'[16] It may be relevant here to remember Solomon who said, 'Folly it were to think that God has a dwelling-place on earth.'[17]

What Swami Vivekananda wanted was to make the motherland strong and vibrant. To fulfil his dream, he wished to have in his India an Islamic body with a Vedantic brain. This would bring about perfect harmony among the followers of all the religions. Every man would then accept and respect all faiths and yet preserve his individuality and grow according to his own law of growth. It is possible if we practise what Vivekananda said, 'we not only tolerate, but we Hindus accept every religion, praying in the mosque of the Mohammedans, worshipping before the fire of the Zoroastrians, and kneeling before the cross of the Christians, knowing that all the religions, from the lowest fetishism to the highest absolutism, mean so many attempts of the human soul to grasp and realize the infinite, each determined by the conditions of its faith and association, and each of them marking a stage of progress. We gather all these flowers and bind them with the twine of love, making a wonderful bouquet of worship.'[18] Let the Hindus maintain their tradition. ❐

> *Swamiji said, 'The living God is within you, and yet you are building churches and temples and believing all sorts of imaginary nonsenses. The only God to worship is the human soul in the human body....'*

16. *CW.*, vol. 2, p. 321.
17. *The Holy Bible*, Knox Version, p. 366.
18. *CW.*, vol. 1, pp. 331–2.

Nanda, The Pariah Saint

(Continued from page 614)

never see. He disappears, gets dissolved like camphor in fire, like salt in water, or, as Sri Shanthananda Saraswati would say, as an iceberg in the ocean, disappears once and for ever, silently, like the surf that sinks into the sea, like the wave that, after roaring loud, dies a silent death. But think not that Nanda is dead. Souls like Nanda's never die, they are immortal here and above. Today is five or six hundred years since the poor *pariah* slave of Adhanur lived and died, and today we sing his praise.

This month, November-December, the lovely girls of the south, richly dressed and beautiful like peacocks, play the merry *kolātam* (a sort of plait-dance) singing the praise of the *pariah* who became a Brahmin, and dancing the dance of the dancing God Natarāja. O reader! loving reader! let us all hasten to love, hasten to stand where Nanda stood, hasten to enter into the Presence, and lose ourselves in It silently and joyfully, a consummation in which angels rejoice, and for which gods rain showers of flowers.

Rightly understood, Nanda's story is an illustration of the great teaching:

> Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it. ❐

(concluded)

New Light on Vedic India and Ancient Civilizations

N.S. RAJARAM

(Continued from the previous issue)

III

Indus to Ganges: Vedic India and the Ancient World

We just saw how colonial politics, German nationalism and some linguistic theories combined to create a version of history that is contradicted by all scientific data. One consequence of this exercise rooted in European politics and scientific ignorance has been to confound a historical problem of monumental importance with pseudo-scientific race theories. The first is the origin and distribution of languages, to wit, why people from India and Sri Lanka to England and Ireland speak languages clearly related to one another. The second, combined with half-baked linguistic ideas, gave birth to the Aryan invasion myth. It is time to disentangle the two and learn more about our ancestors.

Albert Einstein once said: 'A theory must not contradict empirical facts.' It is clear that the current historical theory, centred on India but affecting all of the ancient world fails this very basic test. But once we break loose from this nineteenth century colonial-missionary formulation, what we gain is a window on a very ancient civilization indeed—a world before the dawn of civilizations. We have memories of this primordial world preserved in ancient Indian records—the Vedas and the Puranas, especially the latter. This also helps us find an answer to the puzzle of the origin and spread of Indo-European languages.

First a few words about the sources. For historical purposes, ancient Indian sources can be divided into three types of literature—Vedic, Puranic and the historical epic. The Vedic literature does not contain much history; it was a great fallacy on the part of the nineteenth century scholarship to believe that they could find record of history, especially of their pet fantasy of the Aryan invasion, in the *Rig-Veda.* The result was a massive misinterpretation of the Vedas, distorting it to somehow turn it into a record of an invading Aryan race.

The ancient Indian historical tradition is found not in the Vedas but in the epics and the Puranas. And none of these—the Vedas, the Puranas or the epics—show any knowledge of any invasion, and know of no homeland other than India. They regard countries outside the borders of India as foreign lands exactly as they are done today. For this reason they were rejected as unreliable, for failing to support their pet theory. And a new myth was created that ancient Indians had no historical sense—a charge not supported by facts. Ancient Greeks and Chinese travellers who came into contact with India spoke respectfully of the preservation of history and traditions by the Indians. This rejection of valuable ancient records by nineteenth century scholars should probably be attributed to their lack of scientific training and prejudices. As we have already seen, most of them were missionaries and colonial bureaucrats with their own axes to grind.

Once we make an objective study of ancient literary sources, it is possible to get a remarkably coherent picture of the ancient world going back almost to the last Ice Age. But this requires not only the use of Indian records, but also the correlation of scientific and technical data from a wide range of sources to arrive at important ancient dates. First we need to establish a chronological marker for the very ancient past. Indian tradition has always taken 3102 BC as the date when the Kali Age began, heralded by the famous Mahabharata War. Until recently, most modern scholars (including myself) had treated this date as a myth. Now more recent research shows that the date is in all probability correct. Let me illustrate the idea and also our approach by looking at this date.

The key pointer I take in my work is the knowledge of ancient mathematics, especially geometry. Mathematics has several advantages. First, it has a built-in logic that allows us to trace the origin and growth of ideas. For instance, it is easy to see that knowledge of arithmetic must have come before algebra and, for similar reasons, calculus must have followed progress in algebra and geometry. Further, unlike language and literature, mathematical results are not affected by political and cultural factors. This is particularly relevant to the study of ancient archaeology and literature. We have seen that the Harappan sites of the Indus Valley show very advanced knowledge of town planning. The world had to wait more than two thousand years, until the rise of the Roman Empire, before town planning and sanitation reached the same standards as at the Harappan cities.

Then, we also have a harbour at Lothal, dating back to at least 2600 BC, which shows considerable engineering skill. There are many such examples. Clearly such engineering feats are impossible without fairly sophisticated knowledge of mathematics, especially geometry. Many historians claim that Indians got their knowledge of geometry from the Greeks after Alexander, but that can only be attributed to scientific ignorance. Harappan cities were designed and built two thousand years before Pythagoras. The so-called Theorem of Pythagoras was stated by the Vedic commentator Baudhayana at least two thousand years before him. They could not wait for the Greeks to bring geometry. One cannot do engineering projects like building cities and harbours without knowing mathematics—especially geometry.

The next question is: where did these people get their knowledge of mathematics from? This question is easy enough to answer. After the completion and organization of the Vedas, there came a class of literature known as the Sutras. The Sutras codified and stored all useful knowledge in the form of easy-to-remember mnemonic strings called 'sutras'; the word *sutra* in fact is Sanskrit for string. The Sutra literature includes what are called the Shulba-sutras, which are texts on geometry and mathematics. As I previously noted, these Shulba-sutras contain detailed mathematical instructions for the design and construction of the Vedic altars found at various Harappan sites going back almost to 3000 BC. Town planning and architecture are the secular applications of this originally religious and ritual-oriented mathematics.

This in a way can be compared to the evolution of printing. The first books printed were Bibles, but the craft itself soon transcended its original milieu and brought about the knowledge revolution that we now call the European Renaissance. Just as the Renaissance was made possible by the printing technology used for the Gutenberg Bible, the great urban civilization of the Harappans was an offshoot of the religious

mathematics of the Shulba-sutras.

This ties in naturally with the date of the Mahabharata War. The authors of the Sutra works already treat the Mahabharata War as ancient. Since Harappan archaeology requires knowledge of the mathematics found in the Sutra works, we can definitely say that the Mahabharata War must have taken place before the Harappan civilization reached its peak. The Harappan cities were at the height of their glory in the centuries around 2700 BC. So the traditional date of 3102 BC is seen to be in agreement with the evidence of the Sutra literature. I have found that it is also in agreement with a good deal more evidence from Egyptian and Old-Babylonian mathematics, both of which are based on the Shulba-sutras, as the late A. Seidenberg has shown. I have also shown in my own work that the construction of Egyptian pyramids, going back to 2700 BC and earlier, make use of ideas found in the Shulba-sutras. Astronomy also supports the date of 3102 BC for the Mahabharata War. All this constitutes overwhelming evidence for the traditional date for the War. So we can safely use this date as the benchmark.

European linguists and their modern Indian followers continue to date the Sutra literature to later than 500 BC, that is, more than 2000 years after their applications found in archaeology. A little common sense will show why this is impossible. We now live in the computer age. We also have a lot of literature on computers and computing. This is because the applications of computing and literature on computing have to evolve side by side. We cannot have computer applications today and computer literature coming 2000 years into the future! But this is exactly what the current version of history is telling us. These historians tell us that applications of mathematics can be found in Harappan archaeology c. 3000–2000 BC, while the Sutra literature that forms the technological basis for the civilization was composed only after 500 BC! Only a scientific illiterate will make such an argument. The Harappan civilization therefore must belong to the Sutra period.

To return to the *Mahabharata* period, it marked the end of an epoch and closed the Vedic Age. From this it is possible to get a handle on the date of the Vedic Age. Vyasa, the author of the original *Mahabharata,* is equally famous for the organization and codification of the Vedas that we have today. This as we have seen must have taken place about 3100 BC. We know from ancient genealogical lists that Arjuna's son, Abhimanyu, who was killed in the Mahabharata War was thirty-first or thirty-second in descent from King Sudas of the Battle of Ten Kings fame; Sudas' priest Vasistha we have already met. Taking twenty years per generation which is known to be a good average when long dynasties are involved, we get about 3720 BC for Sudas and therefore also for Vasistha. This we can recall is also the scientifically determined date for Vasistha's Head! So, the closing of the Rig-Vedic Age (which came with Vasistha) must be placed between 3800 and 3700 BC.

The same Vasistha was also the teacher of the famous Rama of the *Ramayana.* Brihadbala, the thirty-first or thirty-second in descent from Rama, was also killed in the Mahabharata War. A similar reckoning as before again places Vasistha and the closing of the Rig-Vedic Age between 3800 and 3700 BC. It was shown by Bal Gangadhar Tilak as far back as in 1893 that astronomical data in the seventh book of the Rig-Veda (due to Vasistha) points to the same date.

The latest data on the course of the Sarasvati river which Vasistha describes as flowing 'from the mountain to the sea' also points to the same date. Careful analysis of data from the French satellite SPOT shows

that the geography and hydrology of North India described in the Rig-Veda belongs to several centuries before 3000 BC. Therefore, on the basis of evidence from mathematics, astronomy, archaeology and metallurgy, we can safely conclude that the Rig-Vedic Age had ended by 3700 BC at the latest. The evidence for this date therefore is just overwhelming. This is now supported by the latest findings from archaeology and metallurgy, and especially by the discovery of silver ornaments at the Sarasvati site of Kunal, dating to before 3000 BC.

The implications for ancient history of this scientifically derived chronological benchmark are truly revolutionary. Historians have always told us that civilization began in the river valleys of Mesopotamia in the third millennium BC. But we now know that the Rig-Veda had been *completed* nearly a thousand years earlier. The beginning of the Rig-Vedic Age and of ancient India must now be placed long before that. This now is supported by a whole lot of scientific data from several different sources.

Vedic scholars like David Frawley and Lokamanya Tilak have found references in the Rig-Veda pointing to dates well before 6000 BC. I myself prefer to be more conservative, but I have no difficulty placing important episodes as far back as 4600 BC. In fact, at around that date, an Indian emperor known as Mandhatr conducted a series of campaigns in the northwest of India against a people known as the Druhyus. This forced them to leave India, and there was a large scale emigration into Central Asia and as far west as Europe. On the basis of linguistic affinities as well as similarities in myths and beliefs, it is possible to show that ancient Indians and Europeans must at one time have been in close contact. By a detailed linguistic and cultural analysis, Shrikant Talageri has shown that many of the ancient Europeans were part of this immigrant wave following Mandhatr's campaign against Druhyus. The Druhyus came to be known as the Druids (Celtic) in ancient Europe.

Then as now the northwest of India was a turbulent region. About a thousand years after Mandhatr's campaign against Druhyus, Sudas again had to contend with a confederation led by the Druhyus and other people from the west and the northwest. The result of course was the famous Battle of Ten Kings recorded by Vasistha in the seventh book of the Rig-Veda. This was one of the pivotal events of ancient history. Among the people defeated and driven out by Sudas were the Prithu-Parthavas, the Parsus, the Alinas and several others recorded in the Rig-Veda. These relate to many ancient peoples of Europe and West Asia.

The Prithu-Parthavas of course are known as the Parthians; the Parthians in fact called themselves Parthava. The Parsus became the Persians, and the Alinas are the Hellenes of the ancient Greeks. Other opponents of Sudas included Pakthas and Balhanas. Their descendants are known today as Pathans (or Pakthoons) and Baluchis of the Bolan pass. And Shrikant Talageri in his brilliant study notes several others. Thus, many of the Indo-European peoples of the ancient world can be traced to India in very ancient times. This incidentally also explains why people from India to Ireland speak languages similar to one another. They were the original Indo-Europeans.

This completely upsets not only the Aryan invasion theory, but the whole version of ancient history. The Indian Aryans were not a branch of the Indo-Europeans, but in fact the root from which the ancient Indo-Europeans sprang—at least linguistically. Further, far from there being any Aryan invasion, there were repeated emigrations

from India stemming from a combination of ecological and political disturbances in the Vedic heartland. This now is supported by ancient inscriptions being found in West Asia and Turkey.

The next question is: why was there such an extraordinary literary and intellectual flowering as seen in the Vedas and the Sutras in ancient India, and what happened to it? The answer, it seems to me, is to be found in the unique ecology of the region following the last Ice Age. The Ice Age began to end, in fits and starts, about 10,000 years ago. This meant a lavish supply of water into the plains of India derived from the melting of accumulated ice caps to the north. Even today, the great rivers of North India are fed by the Himalayan glaciers.

For several thousand years, water from the melting of ice caps turned most of North India into a vast parkland, a veritable Garden of Eden. Many areas like Sind, Rajasthan and Baluchistan that are now arid were then fertile and supported large populations. This can now be confirmed by both archaeology and satellite photography. But this age of abundance was not to last for ever. In the course of several millennia, the stock of ice began to be depleted, putting greater pressure on the land which by then was probably overpopulated. These factors forced people living at the periphery to descend on the Sarasvati heartland in search of water and more productive land. The emigrations following Mandhatr's campaign against the Druhyus as well as the Battle of Ten Kings should be attributed as much to ecological pressures as to the campaigns, per se, of Mandhatr and Sudas. According to this scenario, the dispersal of Indo-Europeans from the Indus-to-Ganges heartland resulted from a combination of ecological and political upheavals.

What happened to the Harappan civilization? Once we reject the idea of the Aryan invasion, we must look to other, possibly natural causes. A frequently mentioned cause is flooding; but floods don't destroy great civilizations spread over a million square miles. Floods bring death, but they also give life. People adapt. Some of the most flood prone areas in the world—Bengal, the Nile delta in Egypt, and the Yangtse river valley in China—they are also among the most densely populated regions. *It is desiccation, the loss of water that destroys civilizations.* And this we now know is precisely what happened to the Harappans.

There is now strong evidence that the neighbouring Akkadian civilization was destroyed by a prolonged drought lasting nearly three hundred years beginning 2200 BC. This may have been triggered by a massive volcanic explosion. Whether the cause was volcanic or not, the effect of this drought on the neighbouring civilizations of Mesopotamia and the Indus Valley was calamitous. They were already being stressed by the gradual depletion of water resources—first by the loss of the ice caps, and eventually by the drying up of the Sarasvati. North India was probably also suffering from over-population. The drought was the *coup de grace.* This also accounts for the widespread appearance of Indian dynasties all over the Middle East and the West Asia—the Hittites, the Mittani and the Kassites—around 2000 BC. These were people displaced by the ecological calamity that overwhelmed Western India beginning 2200 BC.

In summary: the Harappans were not only part of the Vedic Aryan society, but in fact the Vedic Age ended with them. The seeds of both Eastern philosophy and Western rationalism can be found in the Vedic tradition. The Vedas, and more particularly the Rig-Veda belong to an earlier layer of civilization before the rise of Egypt, Sumeria and the Indus Valley. This was the world of

the primeval Aryans, the soil from which grew the mighty Indo-European tree.

What about the recovery of Vasistha's Head? Is that not in fact sufficient to show that the traditional account of history found in ancient records is the correct one? After all, can we not place the date of Vasistha who came at the end of the Rig-Vedic Age firmly before 3700 BC on the basis of tests done on this Head?

From a strictly scientific point of view, I am afraid, that by itself is simply not good enough. That is why I have had to go to this length, correlating data from several sources—mathematics, astronomy, archaeology, satellite photography and others—before I could arrive at the historical scenario given here. So, at least from a technical point of view, all we can say is that Vasistha's Head is one more piece that helps solve the puzzle. With or without it, our conclusions would still be the same. For the proponents of the Aryan invasion, however, the Head along with every other piece of evidence presented here is an insurmountable problem. Their only option is to reject all data and hold on to their pet theory. This in fact is characteristic of every pseudo-science. The model of ancient history being taught in Indian schools is in fact based on pseudo-science.

I hope this helps highlight another point. In dealing with ancient dates and event we must never rest content with a single point of data. We must always try to find as many independent ways of proving a theory as possible. Failure to follow this has been the great failing of nineteenth century scholarship; they rejected everything that failed to conform to their preconceptions. They indulged in what the great Sri Aurobindo called the '...sin of forming a theory in accordance with their prejudices and then finding facts or manufacturing inferences to support it.' This is quintessential pseudo-science.

Another point to note: what has been presented here is only the beginning and not the last word. The study of ancient India must begin afresh, free from nineteenth century fabrications and its modern incarnations. We must do this by combining science and tradition. Modern political and social theories can have no place in the study of ancient history.

But there is yet another purely symbolic way of looking at the reappearance of Vasistha in our midst, for not everything in this world can be reduced to science and hard data. For over two centuries now, some scholars have been striving to destroy history and poison young people's minds with false theories to alienate them from their own ancient heritage. But this was too much for the great sage Vasistha. In a denouement as stunning as his own life was eventful, Vasistha dramatically reappeared in our midst, putting an end to the pretensions of the multitude of non-believers clamouring that neither he nor his Vedic world ever existed. There is a famous passage in the *Bhagavadgita* in which Krishna declares to Arjuna:

When Truth grows faint and
Falsehood reigns,
Then I create myself upon this earth,
O Bharata Prince!
And return—in age upon every age
To uphold Truth and put
Falsehood to flight.

And in fulfilment as it were of this ancient prophesy, Sage Vasistha himself returned to the earth and put prophets of falsehood to flight. The great sage has reminded us of the greatest scientific lesson of all: *Nature is not fooled by mere rhetoric.*

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(Concluded)

Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad

(Continued from page 610)

and plucking them out with a strong will, and not allowing them to enter the mind again; or by giving up our desire for results, as in *karma-yoga,* which purifies us to the extent of enabling us to realize the Self; or by cherishing only the desire to commune with a particular form of the Divine we like, as in *bhakti-yoga;* or by *jñāna-yoga,* the path to realize Atman or Brahman through *nirvikalpa samādhi.*

What is lacking in us to go into that *samādhi* is the will-power to stop ideas other than what is conveyed by *ayam ātmā brahma, this Atman is Brahman, aham brahmāsmi, I am Brahman,* from arising in our mind. This needs extreme control of one's mind. This is in *jñāna-yoga.* The situation is similar in other yogas also. The restrictions of the *karma-kāṇḍa* do not take away our freedom as much as they give us in exchange the power to concentrate all our energies to attain the spiritual goal. If we continue to follow the instructions verbatim and thereby discipline our mind, adhere to the exact and correct performance of this regimen of the *karma-kāṇḍa,* without allowing our likes and dislikes to intrude, it builds up character and strong will-power; it makes us the master of our own potential capacity for divinising ourselves. If we say that we won't listen to these injunctions and will do as we like, appease our ego, submit to whims, caprices and desires, then we put a stop to our evolution. By calling the scriptural injunctions superstition and exercising our own sweet will, we abuse our freedom and fail to discipline ourselves, bringing chaos in our lives and in society. The inner meaning is this: life, according to the *karma-kāṇḍa* philosophy, should be one of total dedication, not of appeasing personal desires; for, the only desire should be to create a fund of good fruits (*adṛṣṭa*) which leads to a happy life in heaven after the body falls. All other desires are but impurities of the mind, preventing us from progress and success—realizing our own divine nature.

(to be continued)

The one vital duty incumbent on you, if you really love your religion, if you really love your country, is that you must struggle hard to be up and doing, with this one great idea of bringing out the treasures from your closed books and delivering them over to their rightful heirs.

—*Swami Vivekananda*

All Work and No Play...*

...often kills children, and almost always snuffs the childhood out of them. But child labour is a reality nobody can run away from, and many want to exploit. With the labour ministry pushing a new set of reforms, Seema Paul presents a case for speedier measures, and G. Srinivasan explains why the government might finally be moving on the issue.

Not very much has been achieved...

In spite of protective legislation, the social evil of child labour has persisted in India right from the early days of the industrial system. The Report of the Royal Commission on Labour appointed during the British rule had noted that children were employed in hazardous work in industries like mica-splitting, shellac-making, *bidi*-making, carpet weaving, glass and other small-scale industries.

This went on although legal provisions existed in the Factories Act, the Indian Mines Act and even the Employment of Children Act to prevent child labour. The commission reported, 'In the cement industry in Rajputana, child labour was employed to a very large extent. Little girls were found working in Cochin state in the spinning sections of the cotton textile industry while Kashmiri children, as young as five years old, worked in carpet-weaving mills.'

The situation continues to be more or less the same today. There are varying estimates of the number of child workers in India but the International Labour Organization believes that every fifth child in the age group of 10 to 15 years is part of the country's active labour force. While the 1971 Census had estimated child workers below the age of 15 years to be at 10.74 million and the Planning Commission in 1983 has projected the number to be 17.36 million, the International Labour Organization put the total figure at 15.1 million in 1975. The Planning Commission has projected that child labour in the country is likely to cross 20.25 million in the year 2000. However, figures may actually be far far short of the reality as there are general limitations to the exercise of estimating the number of children who have to work for a living.

Statistics made available by the labour ministry show that over 17 million children work as child labourers in India. Of this, over 90 per cent are concentrated in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Orissa, and West Bengal. As for the carpet export industry, child labour accounts for 2.7 per cent of its workforce.

The Indian law bans child labour selectively in hazardous industries, a list of which is included in the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act of 1986. These are *bidi*-making, carpet-weaving, cement manufacturing, bag-making, cloth-printing, dyeing and weaving, match-making, explosives and fireworks, mica-cutting and splitting, shellac manufacture, soap manufacture, tanning, wool-cleaning, and the building and construction industry. In industries where child labour is permitted, there are laws for ensuring that children are not made to work beyond specified hours or forced to work during hours that interfere with their education, recreation, rest, and overall physical and mental development. Besides, a provision was under consideration for

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* Courtesy, *The Telegraph*, Calcutta.

providing equal wages for children under the Minimum Wages Act, so that the economic incentive for employers of child labour was removed.

But, as is well known, the law is breached more than it is observed in India. The largest employer of children in India is the unorganized sector, which makes the problem all the more serious. According to the 1981 census, about 86.4 per cent of the total child force was employed in agriculture as cultivators and labourers. Other employers listed by the Committee on Child Labour, 1979, include hazardous industries like mining and quarrying, *bidi*-making, glass and bangle making, handloom and carpet-weaving, match and fireworks, machine tool industry, repair shops and petrol pumps, cashew processing and manufacturing of coir products, domestic workers, helpers in hotels, restaurants, canteens, ragpicking, construction, hawking and vending. What often gets ignored, however, is the employment of children as sex workers.

The Bangkok-based organization 'End Child Prostitution in Tourism' estimates that there are 400,000 children working in the sex industry in India. In fact, some months ago a gang busted in Europe was found to be carrying pictures of nude children indulging in sex acts in Goa.

Whether the new-found social responsibility in the developing world has arisen out of a genuine concern for children or been roused by the fear of cheap imports edging out their goods, is debatable. As Rita Panekar of the NGO 'Butterflies' observes, child labour exists in more heinous forms in India, like in the sex industry, but not many have expressed concern over that.

The unorganized sector has always managed to evade the laws banning child labour due to a host of reasons. Sometimes it is simply by virtue of their small size, while at other times it is by 'persuading' the enforcement machinery to overlook uncomfortable facts by falsifying their records. A manual on child labour titled, 'Children of

LABOUR INTENSIVE

Eleven states account for more than 90 per cent of the child labour force

STATE	%
Andhra Pradesh	14.30
Madhya Pradesh	12.45
Maharashtra	11.42
Uttar Pradesh	10.52
Karnataka	8.30
Bihar	8.08
Tamil Nadu	7.15
Rajasthan	6.01
Orissa	5.15
Gujarat	4.52
West Bengal	4.44

The West has mounted immense pressure on India by refusing to accept goods from industries that employ child labour. One of the worst hit as a result of Western objections to the employment of child labour has been the Indian Carpet industry, 2.7 per cent of whose workforce comprises children. The West is now refusing to buy carpets that do not have tags certifying they come from child labour-free sheds....

HER TIME TABLE

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
6 am to 7 am	*Fetch water*	*Fetch water*	*Fetch water*	*Fetch water*	*Fetch water*	*Fetch water*	*Fetch water*
7 am to 8 am	*Kneed the dough, clean the house*	*Kneed the dough, clean the house*	*Kneed the dough, clean the house*	*Kneed the dough, clean the house*	*Kneed the dough, clean the house*	*Kneed the dough, clean the house*	*Kneed the dough, clean the house*
8am to 9 am	*Baby-sit*	*Baby-sit*	*Baby-sit*	*Baby-sit*	*Baby-sit*	*Baby-sit*	*Baby-sit*
9 am to 1 pm	*Work at the factory*	*Work at the factory*	*Work at the factory*	*Work at the factory*	*Work at the factory*	*Work at the factory*	*Work at the factory*

LUNCH BREAK (HALF A ROTI)

1:30 pm to 5 pm	*Work at the factory*	*Work at the factory*	*Work at the factory*	*Work at the factory*	*Work at the factory*	*Work at the factory*	*Work at the factory*
5 pm to 6:30 pm	*Wash clothes, cut vegetables*	*Wash clothes, cut vegetables*	*Wash clothes, cut vegetables*	*Wash clothes, cut vegetables*	*Wash clothes, cut vegetables*	*Wash clothes, cut vegetables*	*Wash clothes, cut vegetables*
6:30 pm to 7pm	*Prepare father's hookah*	*Prepare father's hookah*	*Prepare father's hookah*	*Prepare father's hookah*	*Prepare father's hookah*	*Prepare father's hookah*	*Prepare father's hookah*
7 pm to 8 pm	*Help mother make dinner*	*Help mother make dinner*	*Help mother make dinner*	*Help mother make dinner*	*Help mother make dinner*	*Help mother make dinner*	*Help mother make dinner*

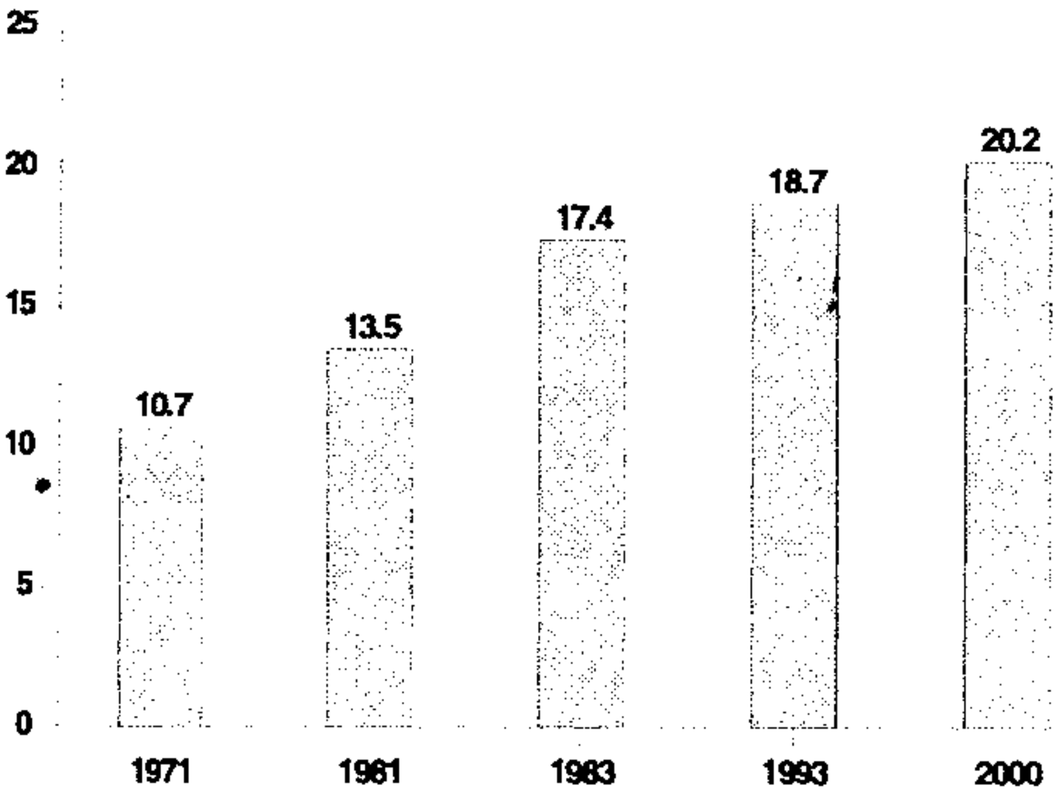
SERVE/EAT (LEFTOVERS, IF ANY) DINNER

8:45 pm to 9:15 pm	*Wash utensils*	*Wash utensils*	*Wash utensils*	*Wash utensils*	*Wash utensils*	*Wash utensils*	*Wash utensils*
9:15 pm to 10 pm	*Press Grandfather's feet*	*Press Grandfather's feet*	*Press Grandfather's feet*	*Press Grandfather's feet*	*Press Grandfather's feet*	*Press Grandfather's feet*	*Press Grandfather's feet*
10 pm	*'Can I sleep?'*	*'Can I sleep?'*	*'Can I sleep?'*	*'Can I sleep?'*	*'Can I sleep?'*	*'Can I sleep?'*	*'Can I sleep?'*

HER DAY'S WORK IS FOR
14 HOURS—7 DAYS A WEEK!
(WITH NO VACATION)
It's time we all gave her a school timetable

MINISTRY OF LABOUR
(Government of India)
Let's give them a chance.
They have but one childhood.
Let us all try to put them in school.

...And in response, the government has begun to show greater sensitivity on the issue. This evocative labour ministry advertisement on improving the lot of the girl child labourer for instance. Unusually well-presented for a piece of government publicity, the advertisement brings out how full of drudgery the day of an underprivileged child in India can be and sets out a new agenda for dealing with an old problem....



...But the problems of the Indian economy are so complex and the child labour sector so vastly unorganized that there aren't any quickfix solutions. Although there is enough enabling legislation, the imposition of a ban is not realistic. For a large number of families, imposing a ban may actually be more inhuman than the conditions in which they work. Most children work out of dire economic need, and most parents send them out to work because they are two new hands for every one new mouth to feed.

Darkness', compiled by Manjari Dingwaney, a Delhi-based lawyer, notes that 'Many of these units or industries, in spite of their unorganized status, are highly organized or are direct links in a highly organized system. Any exploitation of child labour in those industries or units is actually perpetuated by the direct involvement of bigger and organized (or formal) sectors or units.' The carpet-weaving industry is one example.

The conditions of work in the so-called unorganized sector are quite exploitative. The children are underpaid and often not paid at all. They are also overworked and paid at piece-rates which places undue strain upon them. Children are also vulnerable to abuses such as unjustified deductions or third-party payments. But the greatest single cause for concern is the hazardous environment of many of the industries that employ them. Mining, match-box sheds, toy factories which use plastics, and the bangle industry are ready examples of hazardous factories. But even the so called safe sectors turn hazardous due to the children's lack of training and experience in handling tools and their short span of concentration. The use of unguarded machinery, unsafe use of electricity, and shortage of protective machinery are other major problems. Besides occupational hazards, children are often subjected to abuses like separation from parents, isolation amounting to virtual imprisonment and even starvation.

Opinion is divided over whether the government should ban child labour completely or start by implementing the existing law which bans it in hazardous industries. The proponents of the second view feel the government has first got to show its political will on the issue. There is, in fact, a need for a multi-pronged approach for the elimination of child labour with an emphasis on improvement in the quality of primary education. The schools would have to be converted into units where fundamental needs of the children are met, through schemes like mid-day meal and inclusion of creches, so

that girl children can also educate themselves. Besides, specific programmes will also have to be drawn for areas where the problem exists in serious proportions.

...but isn't the West making too much of it?

The growing sophistication in the export industries of developing countries seems to have put the West in a bit of spot. But of late, it has come up with a novel weapon to fight off the threat from third world exports. Its strategy to stymie their trade has been to link goods to abolition of child labour. Hence, there has been an orchestrated attempt to ban the import of carpets from India on the grounds that they involve child labour and that they would grate on the conscience of the rich and the sensitive in the West.

Though child labour is a common phenomenon in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, China and India, it is India that has become the focus of the West's attention and attack. But the fact remains that the government has initiated various welfare schemes and legislative measures to put an end to child labour, especially in unorganized and decentralized sectors like the match industry and the carpet industry. In fact, the Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986, prohibits children from working in occupations concerned with carpet-weaving, cement manufacturing, construction work, dyeing and weaving, manufacture of matches, explosives, fire works, *bidi*-making, wool-cleaning and soldering processes in electronic industries.

The primary objective of the government is the elimination of child labour in hazardous occupations by the year 2000. Besides, the National Authority for the Elimination of Child Labour has also been set up under the chairmanship of the Union labour minister to lay down policies and programmes to eliminate the evil. It aims to withdraw children from work and divert them to special schools which provide non-formal education, vocational training, supplementary nutrition and stipends.

A survey undertaken by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) has revealed that the rate of growth of child labour fell from 3.6 per cent in 1992 to 2.7 per cent in 1994, as a result of various measures taken by the government.

Fearing that the Rs. 1800 crore carpet export industry would be badly hit by the Western ban, the textile ministry has also swung into action. It has had a series of meetings with carpet industry and export promotion bodies to take the sting out of the attack by self-styled sympathizers of cause against child labour.

Among the steps taken is the setting up of a new self-regulatory mechanism of registration-cum-certification of carpet exports in concert with the Indian Carpet Manufacturers, prominent non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and distinguished social workers. This certificate would be issued to exporters when they furnish an affidavit of non-use of child labour in carpet manufacturing, a complete list of looms on which the carpets are woven by them and make a 0.25 per cent contribution towards the welfare fund for the elimination of child labour. The industry has committed a sum of Rs. 4.5 crore towards the welfare of children employed by it and a matching fund would be set up by the textile ministry to bolster the scheme.

While all this goes to indicate the earnestness with which the government is tackling the problem, it can intervene only upto a point. For, in keeping with the policy of economic liberalization and deregulation, the government has been rolling back the

frontiers of its operations.

Though the Indian carpet industry has received most of the flak from the West for employing children, last month, Pakistan also came under attack. According to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, the European Trade Union Confederation and the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation, Pakistan ought to be excluded from the European Union (EU)'s Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) under which their goods qualify for lower duties at the importing end. Under the GSP, all exporters of hand-knit rugs in developing countries are entitled to a 15 per cent reduction in the average EU tariff on carpets of about $4 a square metre. Pakistan, India, Nepal and other exporters of handmade carpets also compete for a small $13 million quota for duty-free import of rugs.

Other Asian nations worry that if the unions succeed against Pakistan, similar complaints could be made against them as well. Thus the fate of the carpet exporting nations hangs in the balance.

Another example of Western vested interest is Bangladesh, which had managed to double its exports of textiles and clothing to the US since 1990. Under pressure from the US domestic industry, nearly 30,000 children were thrown out of their jobs in the country's textile industry. A subsequent study by the British charity agency Oxfam showed that, rather than going to school, many of these children have ended up in far more perilous vocations—in welding shops or in prostitution.

In this context, it is interesting to note that a recent article in *The Economist* stated that if advanced countries really wanted to help the world's working children, there were many ways in which they could do so. They could push for debt forgiveness in the poorest countries or oppose protectionist trade rules that prevent poor countries from exporting their goods. Instead of doing any of these things, mere protesting against illegal employment of children does not help much, the article noted.

Ironically, the latest United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Progress of Nations report documents the sordid way in which rich societies treat their women and girls. Stating that sexual exploitation of children is one of the gravest human rights infringements in the West, the UNICEF asserts: 'Like child labour, it is everywhere...it runs the sordid gamut from incest and sexual abuse by friends and family members to the enforced, servile marriage of the too-young girl to the systematic commercial plundering of children and young teenagers in lucrative prostitution and pornography markets.' According to the report, there are three lakh people under 18 involved in prostitution in the US alone.

Ultimately what counts is how the rich nations treat their own weaker sections including women and children. Panekar points out, for instance, that Italy is well known for the exploitation of children in its leather industry. But elsewhere in Europe too, recession has forced families to send their children out to work. According to one estimate, in UK 43 per cent of children in the 10–18 age group work in abject conditions while in the US, 28 per cent of them in the 15–17 age group work part of the year.

Again, since the West cannot check its own people from flocking to the steamy quarters of Thailand in search of child prostitutes, surely it can have little or no call to project itself as the bleeding heart writhing in anguish at the monstrous way the third world treats its children. ❐

Practical Vedanta

BE CHEERFUL AND CALM

If one believes in Vedanta, one should be cheerful at all times. Nowhere do our scriptures teach us to be pale and gloomy or unhappy. Be cheerful at times of happiness and be equally cheerful when you are defeated and faced with worldly problems. While one is possessing a very cheerful disposition, at the same time one should hold one's mind in poise. Speaking on Bhakti Yoga nearly a hundred years ago, Swami Vivekananda said that, one should let the mind be cheerful, but calm. Never let it run into excesses, because every excess will be followed by reaction. *Uddharṣa*—the stage of excessive merrymaking should be avoided. However, even while being cheerful, rather for remaining cheerful, the mind should not be allowed to be carried away by too much involvement in worldly affairs. This is the real stage of bliss—the bliss that one cannot get from books. The mind should always be cheerful and calm—calm at the time of prosperity and equally at the time adversity. The calm mind alone thinks, and thinks positively in any sphere of thought, be it in spiritual matters, or those related to business, or money, or family. The calmness of the mind is compared to the calmness of the undisturbed lake. Calmness of mind could be achieved, for example, by an hour of spiritual reading; this is a sure and tried formula. Non-cheerfulness is not the characteristic of a religious person. Swami Vivekananda said that being pleasant always and smiling takes us nearer to God, nearer than any prayer. Thus, cheerfulness is the passport for entering the kingdom of God. Why not accept that? By being cheerful a person loses nothing, rather one reaps rich and unexpected dividends.

Cheerful you shall be
And God you shall see. ❐

(Contributed by Subhash Lakhotia, New Delhi)

Reviews & Notices

WOMEN OF POWER AND GRACE: By Timothy Conway; publ. The Wake Up Press, 222 Meigs Rd. #S, Santa Barbara, CA 93109, U.S.A.; 1995; pp. 351; U.S. $ 22.95

This is the era of women's studies, and it is but time that attention is turned towards women in the spiritual field, too. We have here a well-written book, a work of deep devotion and dedication, on nine female spiritual luminaries of the 19th and 20th centuries. These are women who bring solace and joy, instil courage and confidence and, above all, shower love and compassion that 'know no bargain', on innumerable followers. They are, as the author says, 'grace-full women'.

Women in every age and every country had to break many conventions, and face wrath and ridicule to break every single worldly bond to achieve that Freedom which surpasses all social, economic and political freedoms. The women whose lives are portrayed here are no exceptions to this immense struggle; they could 'dare to stand...and say that they possess nothing but God.'

Delineated here are the lives of four European and four Indian mystics, and of an Afghan who spent much of her hundred-odd years in India. (Has the U.S., the mighty political, military and economic giant, not produced a spiritual luminary?) Five of them were married and some raised families, and one—the Afghan princess, Hazrat Baba Jan, fled home to escape marriage and led a nomadic life.

The 'insanity' of Pelagia Ivonovna (1809–1884) of the Eastern Orthodox church will be difficult to comprehend even by the best of the faithfuls; she was misunderstood by her family and friends, too. It was her thaumaturgy and clairvoyance that ultimately attracted people. She was seen 'talking' to celestial beings and she had a vision of Mother Mary at the time of her death.

To those also who are unfamiliar with Christian theology, the assumption of stigmata by Therese Neumann (1898–1962), a German Catholic mystic, would be difficult to comprehend. This lady spent an astonishing 40 year period of continuous and total fasting. She too was clairvoyant and possessed healing powers; even after her passing away, healings occur through her intercession.

Then, we have Mother Frances Cabrini (1850–1917), the Italian nun and saint who brought succour—material and spiritual—to the early Italian immigrants in the U.S., and Mother Maria Skobtsova (1891–1945) of the Russian Orthodox Church, a Karma-Yogini, who gave courage and solace to many of the co-victims, while she too was incarcerated in a Nazi internment camp; she suffered physically and died there.

The Indian mystics include the widely known Anandamayi Ma (1896—1982); the young Mata Amritanandamayi, who is very much among us now and with a large following in India and abroad; Anasuya Devi (1923—1985), known as Jillellamudi Amma, is not so well known outside her home state of Andhra Pradesh; and lastly, Shyama Mataji, who too is still living but spends much of her time at her Ashrama in London. The last named turned the austerities imposed on her (to beget a male child) into an intense yearning for Krishna, her chosen Deity, for which she had to suffer intense physical torture from her mother-in-law.

Not many details are known about the author, Timothy Conway, except that he has studied spirituality and psychology for over 20 years and teaches courses on 'sacred traditions, conscious-dying, peace-making and meditation'.

The book (the author would have you call it a 'sacred space') is indeed a work of deep devotion. The author has obviously taken pains to understand the different cultures and religions to which these female mystics belong. Indian names and terms are correctly spelt, which is not always the case with most writers, and a pronunciation guide is also provided.

Among all the spiritual women whose lives and teachings the author has studied, he finds these nine 'astonishing and inspiring'. He has not explained why it is so, but it is obvious that he has been impressed by the powers of miracles exhibited by them. The appendix deals with 'Miracles and other unusual phenomenon'. Such miracles may not be amenable to modern scientific analysis. However these lives are historical and contemporary, and not myths or legends. The miracles, therefore, cannot be denied, and pose a challenge to the modern sceptical mind.

A good part of the book is devoted to the

teachings of these saints which enhances the value of the book. The author is to be congratulated for his painstaking effort, and one looks forward to the promised larger work on the Women of Spirit.

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HYMN TO SRI DAKSHINAMURTI WITH MAANASOLLAASA: by Nagesh D. Sonde; publ. Vasantik Prakashan, 10 Vatsala Niwas, 65-B Linking Road, Santacruz West, Mumbai, 400 054; 1995; pp. 91; Rs. 25/-.

Sri Dakshinamurti Stotram, or *Sri Dakshinamurti Ashtakam*, is a notable contribution of Sri Adi Shankaracharya to religious literature. It has been translated, interpreted and explained in the language of the common people by a number of seers and scholars. But of all the treatises, *Mānasollāsa* of Sri Sureshvara (often identified with Mandana Mishra but sometimes regarded as a different person) is considered the most appropriate exegesis on Advaita. The reason is that Sri Sureshvara, being a direct disciple of Sri Adi Shankaracharya, had easy access to the Master and could clarify the moot points or resolve his doubts apropos religious questions.

The hymns bring out the quintessence of such concepts as *Satya* (truth), *Ṛta* (cosmic law) and *Dharma* (perennial principles of human behaviour). The realization of the Self is considered to be the realization of the Supreme Lord. Sri Dakshinamurti is the universal Teacher, 'the part-manifestation of Lord Shiva'. The opening stanza of the *Stotra* offers obeisance to Him. 'Teacher connotes energy, anything that is creative, and therefore clarifies.' When someone becomes a teacher, he 'takes over the mantle of the Lord, and the human being becomes only the medium'. That is why the teacher is raised to the status of Brahman or the Supreme Being. He may not use words but speak the language of silence. By his glance, touch or grace he may well bring about a mutation in the psyche of the aspirant.

Although *Mānasollāsa* is recited 'more often out of devotion than out of understanding', it contains gems of spiritual wisdom. What is *That* which *Is?* How does *jiva* (the embodied being) know *That?* What is the medium for wisdom? How does the Self become omniscient and also omnipotent? What is the *Cause* of the World? Is the Lord the material cause or the efficient cause of creation? Is the 'non-existence manifested as the mutable gross objects' the same as the Existence and Eternal Supreme Being? What are the subtle channels of energy in living beings and how do they work? How can one overcome the delusion of *maya?* These and other questions have been lucidly answered.

Nagesh D. Sonde deserves to be congratulated for translating the *Vārtikas* and the *shlokas* in an excellent manner. Explanatory notes to hymns are rich and profound in content. The moderately priced book ought to be read by all those who nurture misgivings about Advaita Vedanta.

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VAIṢṆAVISM: ITS PHILOSOPHY, THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS DISCIPLINE: by Dr. S. M. Srinivasa Chari; publ. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 41 U.A. Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi 110 007; First Edition, 1994; pp. 384; Rs. 350/-.

The book under review is a significant and welcome addition to the scholarly researches into Vaiṣṇava philosophy and religion. Dr. Chari's attempt fills the long-standing lacuna in Vaiṣṇava literature of a non-dispassionate (I do not call it 'passionate') as well as a philosophically-oriented comprehensive study on Vaiṣṇavism.

From ancient times the Vedas and the Āgamas have been interpreted in many ways. Today, quite a few people, the religious as well as the philosophically committed and the secular-minded, are interested in the preservation and propagation of the Scripture-based traditions. They have been writing a good deal about the interpretation and contemporary relevance of the texts of the remote past and their traditional development. In the course of the development of the Āgamic tradition, an extensive post-scriptural literature came into focus. Its chief currents, with spiritual and religious implications, were represented by Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Śāktaism. The monotheistic system of Vaiṣṇavism represents, as the author has ably established, a developed and consistent form of Vedic and Āgamic religions. Dr. Chari brings together a comprehensive account of materials, sometimes innovating, from original sources, viz. *Ṛg-Veda*,

Vaiṣṇava Āgamas, Upaniṣads, Purāṇas, Epics, and Āḷvār's hymns, amply confirming his beliefs and theses.

In order to accomplish the hard task of writing something scholarly in modern times on what is 'oldest living', one requires a visionary orientation. Having such a plan in his mind, the author has to be faithful both to the traditional orthodox beliefs and to the philosophical openness regarding rational inquiries. Dr. Chari, who 'hails from an orthodox Vaiṣṇava family' and was 'trained up by eminent traditional teachers', 'has a brilliant academic record', 'has travelled widely', and 'has participated in International Conferences and seminars', has naturally done justice to the contents and the implications of the scriptural symbols and *sūtras* in his theological and philosophical deliberations.

The author observes in the Preface that, in the book 'an attempt has been made to present in English and in a single volume a comprehensive account of Philosophy, Theology and Religious Discipline of Vaiṣṇavism'. This, I am afraid, is a difficult task he set for himself to accomplish within a space of 343 pages.

Besides an erudite Introduction the volume consists of four Parts. The first one contains a résumé of 'Historical Development of Vaiṣṇavism', wherein Dr. Chari traces the historical roots of the conception of the monotheistic reality in general and the Vaiṣṇavite ideas in particular in the symbolic terms and statements of the *Ṛg-Veda* and the Āgamas. The author has also discussed other linguistic sources of Vaiṣṇava beliefs, viz. the Upaniṣads, Epics, Purāṇas, Āḷvārs' hymns, and scholarly *granthas* by different Ācāryas (Yāmuna, Rāmānuja, and others), upto the works of Vedānta Deśika. Nevertheless, the author has failed to put forward an exhaustive and satisfactory account of the sources and phases of the development of Vaiṣṇavism. He himself seems to acknowledge this short-coming when he writes, 'The literature on Vaiṣṇavism is very extensive, and an exhaustive study of all this literature would run into volumes' (p. 38).

The Philosophy of Vaiṣṇavism is discussed in Part II of the book. It is an exposition of the philosophical doctrines of Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta in order to explain 'how the theological concepts of Vaiṣṇavism have their roots in the Vedānta theories' (p. 49). The author has succeeded in giving the details, though on a minor scale, of the arguments proposed by several Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas. Somewhat amazingly, Dr. Chari states, sometimes, what seems irrational but yet retains the form of a rational argument: '...such a theory bridges the gulf between religion and philosophy because the personal God of a religion is not, and can not be basically, distinct from the ultimate Reality of philosophy' (p. 54). Such statements appear to be general, but they are not so. What the author says perhaps suits the theories of the Viśiṣṭādvaita. I hope Dr. Chari is well acquainted with the position of the Advaita-Vedānta. I fail to understand why he gives the heading, 'Proof for Existence of Reality' (p. 50), for the passage wherein he discusses only 'Proof for Existence of God'. Another heading, 'Definition of Ultimate Reality' (p. 49), is questionable. 'Definition' is a technical term in philosophy. What is ultimate is also basic and something non-classifiable. It can not be defined, though its nature can be described, perhaps, metaphorically.

The third part of the book presents details of the Vaiṣṇava-theological presuppositions and theories. As regard the contents of Part II and Part III, any reader can easily observe an overlapping of some details. The author has found it difficult to distinguish the purely philosophical issues from the purely theological issues of Vaiṣṇavism: He has written in the Introduction, '...in Indian Philosophy... philosophy and religion are not treated as different from each other as is done in the West. The two are complimentary and they often overlap' (p. xxvii). Part III occupies the major portion of the book. Next to it, Part IV is a short chapter which deals with the details of religious practices, sacraments and ideas related to the cultivation of ethical values in the Vaiṣṇava religion. I must add that, Dr. Chari's philosophical genius is manifest in his attempt to justify the ideal of *Prapatti* (pp. 277–82).

In the 'Conclusion', the author appears in a fresh and creative mood. He has evaluated the Vaiṣṇava-theses in a positive and defensive(?) spirit. The style that the author has adopted while writing the conclusion of the 'Conclusion' (p. 342) could have scrupulously avoided giving the least impression of propagandizing. Moreover, the summary of the Conclusion was also unnecessary, for it has detracted from the beauty of the work.

All said and done, the undoubted merit of Dr. Chari for undertaking this task and also translating the Sanskrit terms into English deserves unstinted recognition. A careful reading of the book confirms that this well-documented work is expressive of the author's life-long philosophical and religious involvement with Vaiṣṇava thought. Certainly this is a monumental study, and scholars interested in advance studies of Vaiṣṇavism will find here authentic information and in-depth philosophical deliberation.

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RADIANT ETERNITY: REFLECTIONS ON SRI RAMAKRISHNA: by M. Sivaramakrishna; publ. Sterling Publishers, Pvt. Ltd., L-10 Green Park Extension, New Delhi 110 016; 1995; pp. 139; Rs. 200/-.

Many scholars, intellectuals and devotees, both Eastern and Western, have been fascinated with the wonderful, unique and God-centred life of Sri Ramakrishna, and various attempts have been made to write on this 'Unique Phenomenon'. The book under review is one more attempt by a learned author who is also a devotee of Sri Ramakrishna. He dwells in depth on the various facets of Sri Ramakrishna's radiant and eternal personality.

The book is composed of fifteen chapters, grouped into five sections. In the first chapter, entitled 'Radiant Eternity', the author portrays Sri Ramakrishna as the real, radiant eternity manifested in human form, and says that a devotee's intense love can invoke his real presence. The second chapter is a contemplation of the Master as imaged by the Holy Mother. Reflection on the limbs and body of Sri Ramakrishna is the subject matter of the third chapter. The fourth deals with 'listening to Ramakrishna', where it is emphasized that 'our links with Ramakrishna and his with us is *bhāva*' (p. 28). Essentially, Section One is full of the loving reflections of a devotee on his *Iṣṭa* (Chosen Ideal) and is perhaps the most interesting.

Section Two, divided into four chapters (nos. 5 to 8), are titled: 'Gaya-Leela-Kshetra of the Descent'; 'The Dream and the Descent'; 'Incarnate Divinity: Purpose and Function'; and 'Sarvadharma Swarupaya: A New Model of Synthesis'. This section deals with the legendary and historical significance of Gaya, showing Gaya as a fitting place for Kshudiram's dream of the descent of Ramakrishna; and with the purpose and significance of Sri Ramakrishna's advent as Incarnate divinity. The chapter, 'Sarvadharma Swarupaya', focusses on Sri Ramakrishna as an excellent reconciler—not only of all the dharmas, but of human energy and divine energy.

Section Three comprises of another four chapters (9 to 12). In chapter 9, 'Maya and Master', the author highlights Ramakrishna's unique view of māyā. He saw māyā not as an illusion but as an attitude—as love for the world, and he accepted māyā as a state of experience with its own validity. The Master's view of money as something that is just a vital medium defining individual and corporate life, but which must not be allowed to acquire unilateral validity is the subject matter of the tenth chapter. 'Money and Master'. In chapters eleven and twelve, Ramakrishna's lively interest in drama, as also his entire logic of meditative life—as revealed in his analogy of the maid-servant—are described.

In the thirteenth chapter, the author marvels at the miracle of the Master—how Girish Ghosh, a proud sceptic, an extremely rational person and a born iconoclast, succumbed to Sri Ramakrishna's pure, immaculate and unselfish love, and totally surrendered himself to the Master with love and reverence. Chapter fourteen is an extended meditation on the resultant implications of the meeting of many outstanding figures with Ramakrishna, with the focus on Bankim Chandra Chatterjee.

The last chapter is on the *Gospel*, wherein the author proves that the *Gospel* reflects a structural link or analogue with the scriptures of the past, and that it is a rare exemplar of modern narrativizing of ancient truths.

Throughout the text the author quotes copiously from the Eastern and Western metaphysical and psychological literature, which definitely helps to corroborate and consolidate his arguments. Though his attempt is admirable, some may not enjoy reading this book; for, the expressions are unfamiliar, and one feels rather lost in the highly complex style used to study a simple life. Hence, though written with a scholarly background, the book may have to struggle to become popular. Printing, get-up and cover page are upto the usual mark of the publishers.

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The test of Ahimsa is absence of jealousy. Any man may do a good deed or make a good gift on the spur of the moment or under the pressure of some superstition or priestcraft, but the real lover of mankind is he who is jealous of none. The so-called great men of the world may all be seen to become jealous of each other for a small name, for a little fame, and for a few bits of gold. *So long as this jealousy exists in a heart, it is far away from the perfection of Ahimsa.*

—Swami Vivekananda